

**A Few Memories  
of a  
Long Life**



**R. C. WALLACE**

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**A FEW MEMORIES  
OF A LONG LIFE**

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**R. C. WALLACE**



THESE few recollections of the Civil War are jotted down at the earnest and repeated request of my children. They are written entirely from memory, which, after the lapse of fifty years, must be more or less imperfect. They are in no sense a connected story, but just a few memories put down as they happen to come up from the depths of the past. They are not intended for the public eye, but should they chance to fall into the hands of any outside the family, don't expect much, and you'll not be disappointed. My only hope is that they may be found of interest to my children and grandchildren as time goes on.

R. C. WALLACE.



R. C. Wallace

1865-

## THE REVEILLE.

Bret Harte, 1861.

Hark! I hear the tramp of thousands,  
And of armed men the hum;  
Lo! a nation's hosts have gathered  
Round the quick alarming drum—  
Saying, "Come  
Freeman, come;  
Ere your heritage be wasted," said the quick alarming drum.

"Let me of my heart take counsel;  
War is not of life the sum;  
Who shall stay and reap the harvest  
When the autumn days shall come?"  
But the drum  
Echoed, "Come;  
Death shall rear the braver harvest," said the solemn sound-  
ing drum.

"But when won the coming battle,  
What of profit springs therefrom?  
What if conquest, subjugation,  
Even greater ills become?"  
But the drum  
Answered, "Come!  
You must do the sum to prove it," said the Yankee- answering  
drum.

"What if, 'mid the cannons' thunder,  
Whistling shot and bursting bomb,  
When my brothers fall around me,  
Should my heart grow cold and numb?"  
But the drum  
Answered, "Come!  
Better there in death united, than in life a recreant-come!"

Thus they answered-hoping, fearing,  
Some in faith, and doubting some,  
Till a trumpet voice proclaiming,  
Said, "My chosen people, come!"  
Then the drum  
Lo! was dumb,  
For the great heart of the Nation, throbbing answered, "Lord  
we come!"



# A Few Memories of a Long Life

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## A FEW MEMORIES OF THE FIRST BATTLE OF BULL RUN— AFTER 52 YEARS.

On the 18th day of April, 1861 there was held a meeting of the Detroit Light Guards, a company that had been in existence some years, and of which I was a member. The Detroit Light Guards was a well known company and furnished, I think, two Major Generals, several Brigadiers and a large number of Field and Line Officers to the Union Army during the war. It still keeps up its organization, the old members being carried on the Veteran list.

At the meeting on the 18th it was resolved to enlist under the call of President Lincoln for seventy-five thousand men to serve three months, unless sooner discharged.

Many patriotic speeches were made on the occasion. Among the speakers was George C. Bates, a well known lawyer and orator of the time. He had a son in the Company named Kinsey who was a jolly, fat, rollicking boy. In his speech Mr. Bates offered his son as a sacrifice on the altar of his country, as Abraham had offered Isaac (or something to that effect), in ancient times. Kinsey sat back in the audience shaking his fat sides with laughter, and being unmercifully jollied by the boys.

This same Kinsey Bates, later in the war, became the Captain of a Horse Battery in the regular army, and made good, but whether or not the sacrifice was ever made I never learned.

Perhaps the proudest moment of my army life was when an order was read, on Dress Parade, promoting to Corporals, Kinsey Bates and R. C. Wallace. I felt my oats and was quite sure now the army would march on to victory, since I was now a corporal. But this was before the first Battle of Bull Run.

In due time we were mustered in and left on our way to Washington City. The whole trip was an ovation until we reached the City of Baltimore; there the scene suddenly changed, instead of cheers for Lincoln and the Union, everybody was shouting for Jeff Davis and the Confederacy.

A few days before our arrival, the 6th Massachusetts, in passing through the city, had been assaulted and several of their men

killed. The mob evidently saw that we were ready for business and did not molest us except by throwing a few bricks and stones. We were loaded for "Bar" and had we been attacked, some of the Baltimore Chivalry would have been mustered out for good. On the other side of the city we took cars and went on our way.

Arriving at Washington we were quartered in several vacant buildings, our Company in a vacant storeroom near Pennsylvania Avenue. At that time the Senate Chamber was occupied by some Pennsylvania troops. As I went in, some were seated in seats formerly held by Southern Senators—with their names on the desks—and the soldiers were holding a mock senate and having lots of fun.

We remained in Washington until the 23rd of May when, on that night, began the first advance into Virginia. It was a bright moonlight night and the glittering of the bayonets in the moonlight, as the column crossed Long Bridge, was a sight long to be remembered.

We arrived at Alexandria—eight miles from Washington—after daylight on the morning of the 24th. We had been preceded by a New York Regiment called the Ellsworth Zouaves, commanded by Col. Ellsworth. On marching up King Street they came to the Marshall House where a confederate flag flew from the roof. Col. Ellsworth, taking with him a man or two, went up and pulled the flag down. On his return he was met on the stairs by the proprietor of the hotel, who shot and killed him. The man was then shot and killed by one of Ellsworth's men.

That night I stood guard—for the first time in the enemy's country—on the corner opposite the Marshall House.

Our Company took quarters in a house that had been occupied by the enemy, who had left so quickly that their breakfast was still cooking on the stove. We finished and ate it.

In a short time our Regiment was sent out to Shutters Hill, about a mile from town, where we went into camp and proceeded to build the first fort built in the neighborhood; it was named Fort Ellsworth.

We remained at Shutters Hill about a month or more, when preparations began for a forward movement. The army was got in shape and the march began to Bull Run about the middle of July.

The army reached Centerville about the 18th and camped until the early morning of the 21st. Before daylight on that day we were on the road. Our division, commanded by Gen. Heintzleman left the main road and took a road through the woods that would bring us to Bull Run some distance above the Stone Bridge. We forded the creek near Sudley Springs and reaching Sudley Church, divested ourselves of all surplus clothing, blankets, etc., and were ready for the fray.



The Regiment went forward until we came to the grade of an unfinished railroad where we took shelter in a deep cut and rested there, protected from the fire of the enemy, until ordered forward. Soon the order came to advance and we started for the top of a ridge in our front. As we marched in line up the hill, we were met by the Ellsworth Zouaves coming down pell-mell. We kept on through the mob of Zouaves until the top of the hill was reached when we were halted and firing begun.

The enemy occupied another ridge with a shallow ravine between us, and while we couldn't see them because of the timber and bushes, we knew they were there by the bullets that came our way.

Their flag could be seen above the brush and looked very much like our own. While aiming at their flag, the man next to me pulled down my gun and yelled "don't you see that's our flag". I couldn't see it.

Our Company color bearer, Billy Cunningham was shot down; two of us carried him back a few rods and left him under the shade of a bush, he having been killed outright. He was a very promising young fellow.

I wont undertake to say just how long we occupied that position. It seemed a long while, but perhaps only an hour or two, when troops were seen advancing on our right. For a moment we thought it was reinforcements for us from the Valley of the Shenandoah that were expected. In a few minutes they ran out a cannon in their front and began firing at us. It was not long before the enemy showed a strong force on our right and began a lively fire.

Our army were all raw, green men and were pretty well played out. Some of them needed only an excuse to quit the game and here they had it. The men began drifting to the rear and it was not long before our whole army was on the retreat, all organization was broken and the army was a mob.

There were four of us who kept together and stayed together until the end. While drifting off the field we came to a man on a grey horse, who, with a regimental flag in his hand, was earnestly imploring the men to halt and make a stand. He might as well have talked to a drove of stampeded mules. I admired that man and often wondered who he was. Three years later, during the Wilderness Campaign, I was standing by the roadside viewing the passage of the Second Corps, when I saw the same man riding at the head of a Division. On inquiry I found it was General Wadsworth. A few hours later on the same day, he gave up his life for the cause he had so nobly defended. He surely was a patriot and his memory deserves to be honored by his countrymen.

The four of us who had started together on the retreat, pushed along, passed Sudley Church where the wounded were being loaded into ambulances, and seeing the Stone Bridge crowded with men

and artillery, wagons, etc., we concluded to ford the creek above the bridge; then coming back to the road we found everything in confusion. It was worse here than on the field, men were throwing away everything to lighten them up. Even musical instruments and drums were scattered along the road. Some officer had even dropped his sword, which I picked up and brought with me to camp.

Some wagons were left standing on the road, the drivers having made off with the mules. Some were overturned and the contents scattered about.

Many spectators had come from Washington to see us clean up the Rebs—they perhaps helped to make the stampede—and they were trying to push their buggies through the crowd. Everyone was in a hurry and the “Devil take the hindmost.”

The four of us thought best to leave the road and take to the hills and fields, as we fully expected the enemy to follow us up. We had walked a mile or more when we came to a field of new-mown hay; it looked good to us. We had had a hard day and were very tired. Gathering a lot of hay into the corner of the fence, we lay down to rest. I don't remember ever having enjoyed a sweeter sleep. In the early dawn it began to rain and woke us up; shouldering our guns we took our way.

Arriving near Centerville where we expected to find our Army, one of us crept up a hill and looked down, but saw only a few wounded or stragglers around a camp-fire. We then went around Centerville and came to the main road farther along.

In a field near the road we found a horse that had been slightly wounded, but was able to walk. As one of our fellows was not feeling well, we put him on the horse to ride. The horse had on a collar and part of a harness and had belonged to the Artillery, having received a slight wound on his leg. After taking the pike we kept it for the balance of the trip.

Traveling along we came to a buggy that some one had abandoned; there was not much the matter with it. Now we had a horse and buggy and how were we going to get them connected. In a barn by the roadside we found part of a double harness. Borrowing it for the occasion, we soon had the buggy hitched to the horse and started off in fine style.

We had not travelled far until we overtook a poor wounded soldier who was slowly creeping along, of course we took him in, one of us getting out. In the next two or three miles we had picked up all the wounded men our buggy would hold, we marching along on foot. It had rained steadily all day and we were wet to the skin, but otherwise O. K.

A few miles further on brought us to Fairfax Courthouse, there we surely thought our Army would stop, but again we were disappointed, there were none there but a few stragglers. Near the road we noticed a pile of clothing as big as a small hay-stack that

our men had thrown away and had been picked up by the citizens and negroes.

It appeared later that the cavalry of the enemy reached Fairfax about two hours after we passed through—close enough.

Well along in the afternoon we arrived at our old regimental camp at Clouds Mill where we found our Quartermaster busily packing up to move to Washington, here we turned over to him our horse and buggy and left our four wounded passengers, once more shouldering our arms started for Alexandria four miles away. On nearing the town we resolved to enter in military style. Forming two ranks we marched along, there stood by the side of the road two men, citizens, and of course Rebs. One said to the other "By G—, there's the only organized body of troops I've seen to-day".

Taking stock, we found there was enough money in the crowd to hire a room for the night; finding a room in a cheap hotel, we piled in and slept as only tired men can.

In the morning, early, we were on the road to Washington—eight miles away. We were soon overtaken by an officer, riding in a hack, who asked us to get in and ride, which of course we did, and arrived at Washington in fine style.

On walking up Pennsylvania Avenue we met Aleck Copeland, from Detroit, whom I knew. He stopped us and finding we had had nothing to eat all day, took us into a restaurant, paid for four good meals for us and went his way, and took with him the thanks of four hungry boys.

After supper we started out to find our Company and located them in the same room occupied by us on first coming to Washington. On our entering the room the boys set up a yell and were glad to see us as they had supposed us captured. We were in a sorry plight after a long and muddy tramp, but otherwise were feeling well and glad to get back.

In a week or so the Regiment was got together, started for home and was mustered out. We were paid off in gold coin for the last time during the war.

The Battle of Bull Run was a blessing in disguise to the people of the North. It woke them to a realization of the real condition of the country. Many lurid accounts were published in the newspapers. Pictures were seen of the awful rout that occurred on the field and everything was exaggerated. As a matter of fact I saw no running where the fight took place, but the men fell back in a sullen, dogged manner until they had got away from the presence of the enemy. It was then the disgraceful rout began, and they lost their heads and everyone was pushing to get ahead of the rest. When men get stampeded they have no more reason than a dumb animal, not even as much as some animals. They became mere selfish brutes. Bull Run was a costly experience, but was really worth all it cost, as it roused the North to see what

they were up against and that the war was a reality and not a shadow, as some of our people thought it was.

I should have stated in the foregoing that the Detroit Light Guards became Company "A" of the First Michigan Infantry. The Company was commanded by Capt. C. M. Lum, First Lieut. John D. Fairbanks, Second Lieut. W. A. Throop, Orderly Sergeant Geo. Grummond.

The Regiment was commanded by Col. O. B. Wilcox. At the first Bull Run our Colonel was wounded and taken prisoner and not exchanged for nearly a year. Later in the war he became a Major General. Capt. Lum was also wounded at the first battle and later became Colonel of the Tenth Michigan Infantry and died in Detroit some years ago. John D. Fairbanks became Major of the Fifth Michigan and was killed on the Peninsula during the McClellan Campaign. W. A. Throop became Lieut. Colonel of the First Michigan Infantry, reorganized, lived through the war and died in Detroit many years ago. Geo. Grummond joined the regular army and was killed by Indians on the plains in 1866.

A country boy named Smith H. Hastings was a private in the regiment and later joined the Fifth Michigan Cavalry as a Lieutenant. He became Colonel of the Fifth Cavalry and was one of the best ones we ever had. After the war closed he went to Mexico thinking to take a part in their war, but arrived too late as the trouble was ended. He located in Denver and died there some years ago.

Wm. H. Ross a private in Company "A" became Lieut. Colonel of Artillery, served with Sherman on his march to the Sea and acquitted himself with credit.

Among the privates of Company "A" were two splendid young fellows named Arnold and Bloodgood. They became officers in the reorganized regiment and both were killed during the war. At the beginning they were students at Ann Arbor.

One private of Company "A" was wounded at the first Bull Run by a ball passing through his lungs. He lay on the field for forty-eight hours and when taken to the field hospital, one of the Rebel doctors said to the other: "If he had been anything but a d—d Yankee he would have been dead long ago." We can imagine how inspiring that must have been to the patient, but he lived through it all and told me of it after the war. Nearly all of Company "A" returned to the field as commissioned officers and I have never heard of one who brought disgrace upon himself or his command.

On leaving Washington the Regiment was drawn up in front of the Whitehouse and President Lincoln came out and addressed us, thanking the Regiment for what it had done and expressing the hope that we would all return and maintain the integrity of the flag until the end of the war, and most of them did so.



Some years ago there was a reunion of the members of Company "A" at the Russell House in Detroit. There were seven members who took seats at the table; I did not attend. Of the seven I don't know one who survives to-day.

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### THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND MORE.

We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more,  
From Mississippi's winding stream and from New England's shore;  
We leave our ploughs and workshops, our wives and children dear,  
With hearts too full for utterance, with but a silent tear;  
We dare not look behind us, but steadfastly before:  
We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more!

If you look across the hill-tops that meet the northern sky,  
Long moving lines of rising dust your vision may descry;  
And now the wind, an instant, tears the cloudy veil aside,  
And floats aloft our spangled flag in glory and in pride,  
And bayonets in the sunlight gleam, and bands brave music pour:  
We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more!

If you look all up our valleys where the growing harvests shine,  
You may see our sturdy farmer boys fast forming into lines;  
And children from their mother's knees are pulling at the weeds,  
And learning how to reap and sow against their country's needs;  
And a farewell group stands weeping at every cottage door:  
We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more!

You have called us, and we're coming, by Richmond's bloody tide  
To lay us down, for Freedom's sake, our brothers' bones beside,  
Or from foul treason's savage grasp to wrench the murderous blade,  
And in the face of foreign foes its fragments to parade.  
Six hundred thousand loyal men and true have gone before:  
We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more!

(Anonymous)



## A TRIP TO LIBBY.

In 1862 the Fifth Michigan Cavalry was organized at Detroit. Up to that time the South had been successful in nearly every conflict that had taken place between the Armies of the Union and the Confederacy. The outlook was discouraging. Mr. Lincoln had issued a call for three hundred thousand more men, to serve three years, or during the war. The Fifth Michigan Cavalry was organized under that call. I joined it as a supernumerary, Second Lieutenant of Company "L".

Our time was entirely taken up with drilling, mounted and dismounted, for a month or more. After getting our horses many amusing scenes took place. Many of us were not accustomed to horse-back riding and it took us some time to learn. I was among the greenest of the green and never had a spur on my heel until one day when we were ordered out for mounted drill. My horse was rather frisky and I got onto him with some misgiving. Hardly was I seated when he began to cavort about, as if he knew just how I felt. The more he cut up, the harder I clung on with my heels, and the more the spurs entered his flanks. The contest was not long. I soon found myself on the broad of my back in a pool of water. Discipline demanded that I mount again, which I did, but concluded, for the time at least, to ride without spurs. After that the horse and I got better acquainted and finally became quite friendly. There were others who had a like experience.

I recall one case, where the horse ran away, tossing the rider over his head. The rider landed safely in a haystack on the grounds. We continued to drill and become accustomed to camp duty until the time came to go to the front.

We finally got off and arrived in Washington, going into camp on Capitol Hill near the Lincoln Hospital. Our camp was on a bleak range of hills, composed of a sticky, dobe soil and the mud was always with us. The weather soon became cold and rainy, with now and then a snow storm, which added nothing to our comfort.

One night as I lay in my tent, thinking how nice it was to be under cover during the cold storm, the officer's call sounded, and reporting at the Colonel's tent, we were told to get ready to march in an hour. It was the first call of the kind that we had had and the grumbling among the officers and men, at being called on to march on such a night, was quite general. After a good deal of confusion we got away, but were back in camp again in twenty-four hours. There seemed to be no object in that march unless to accustom us to Army life.

We were in Washington till near spring, when the Regiment was moved out to the vicinity of Fairfax Courthouse, where we were brigaded with the First, Sixth and Seventh Michigan Cavalry and did picket duty for some months.

Our Regiment was camped on Difficult Run near Hawkhurst Mills where the first death of the Regiment took place. A Lieutenant, in cleaning his pistol, discharged it and the bullet killed him.

One Sunday morning after inspection, I told the First Lieutenant, commanding the Company, that I would take a ride outside the lines to look at the country and notice how the roads ran. He gave me permission. So, taking one man with me, I started out. It was a fine bright morning and I was slowly riding along, with head down and hands in my pockets, when I heard a rustling in the brush behind me. Looking around I saw two men on horseback, spring out on the road and cry "halt." They were dressed in grey and were Rebs. The road was heavily lined on both sides with tall brush. I put spurs to my horse and he leaped forward. Just then two more men in grey came out of the brush ahead of me, crying "halt". I then pushed through the brush into the woods and ran plump into the Rebel reserve of some dozen men or more. One of them called out "you may as well quit, we don't want to kill you". As there was nothing else to do, I rode out and surrendered myself to the officer in command. He started to question me as to the troops in the neighborhood, to which questions I made no reply. One of his men, shoving his pistol in my face said "I'll make him talk." I then looked at the officer and said "I'm your prisoner". He told the man to desist.

The man who had left camp with me, had lingered behind, but coming up was taken in as I had been.

Soon there came two men riding out and the Rebels sprung their trap too soon. The men turned and rode back, the Rebels firing at them as they ran. That firing alarmed our camp and the Rebels, mounting in haste, started us off through the woods avoiding all roads. There were four other Yankees, who had been captured before my arrival, so there were six prisoners in all.

When the firing was heard in our camp, a Company was quickly mounted and started out; but as the Rebs kept to the woods for quite a distance and our people took the roads, they of course, could see no Rebels. After scouring the country round about, they went back to camp.

We kept on through the woods for some miles, when coming to a cross road, a man was sent ahead to see that the course was clear. We took the cross road and crossed the main road a short distance away. As we crossed the Pike, I cast a longing look in

the direction of our camp. The man who rode by my side noticed it, and said "No use, you couldn't make it." He seemed to know what was going on in my head. We travelled along until about noon, when we stopped at a haystack to rest and to let the horses feed. The Rebels also ate their lunch there, of which they gave me some. While there, the officer, looking my sabre over, remarked "This is quite a nice sabre." I replied "Yes, I hate to lose it. The boys gave it to me when leaving home." "Well," he said, "I may get it back to you some time". I took no stock in that talk.

During the following winter, after being exchanged, I was back with the Regiment, camped at Stevensburg. The sabre came to me through the Army express, with a letter from a Union officer, stating that Capt. Dushane, of the Confederate Army, who was wounded and captured, had requested him to send the sabre to Wallace of the Fifth Michigan Cavalry. I was surprised but glad. Years after the war, I made inquiry for Capt. Dushane, but found he was no longer living. I wanted to thank him for what he had done. It was so out of the regular.

Our march was continued until we arrived at Upperville, in the afternoon. While there I was approached by an old gentleman, who condoled with me at being a prisoner. He told me that some months previous, while the Regiment was passing his home, some of our men had entered and were busy going through the rooms, looking for valuables. An officer appeared on the scene and drove them out. He said that I was that officer. He was very profuse in his thanks and offered to do anything for me that he could, suggesting that I go to his home spend the night, if so permitted. My guard objected because the house was some miles away; but among Moseby's men present, there was one young doctor, who said that he was going to spend the night at a house near by, and that I might go with him if, I would give my word of honor, that I would not try to escape. This I did.

The afternoon was spent in Upperville in company with a number of young Confederates, who treated me royally. No word was spoken that could hurt my feelings in any way; but they acted toward me, as if I had been one of their number.

When evening came, the young doctor took me over to a nice house, a mile or two from the village. There we sat down to the family table and had a meal, such as I had not enjoyed for many a day. When bedtime came we were shown to a nicely furnished room and retired to rest in a better bed than I had been accustomed to, even at home. After the excitement of the day, I was ready to enjoy the rest, and did.

In the morning we took breakfast with the family, the lady of the house doing the honors and treating me as if I were a friend. She even sympathized with me in my unfortunate condition. There were no men in the family. I presume they were in the army.

In the morning after breakfast our horses were brought to the door and after expressing my thanks for the way I had been treated, we mounted to ride back to the village. I have always regretted not getting the name of that family, or forgetting it if ever known; for they were gentle folk of the best breed.

On arriving at Upperville, we found that there was a gathering of the Mosby clan, about to start out on some expedition and I was very much interested in looking over the personnel of the gang. I was surprised to find that they were nearly all bright looking, intelligent young fellows, many of them, I was told, young students and well-to-do farmers, sons of the country round about. They were of a better class than is usually found in the ranks of either army. I was taken up to Col. Mosby and by him questioned as to which Regiment I belonged. "Oh", he said, "You belong to the Brigade that is armed with the Spencer Carbine." Replying that I did, he remarked that he intended to arm his Command from that Brigade. I smiled and said, "I hope you will have a good time in doing so, Sir." He then cast his eye on my horse, remarking that it seemed to be a good one and that he would take it for his own use. He then mounted my horse and rode away. He was a clean cut little man, with a clear, bright eye and looked the man he was. His men certainly gave us more trouble than three times their number of any other Command.

In a short time the Yankee prisoners were gathered together, and we were started on foot for Gordonsville. Before leaving, one of the men who had captured me came to bid me good-bye, and handed me a handful of Confederate money, saying I would need it to buy tobacco while in prison. He and I had become pretty well acquainted and he was a nice gentlemanly, young fellow. His name was Walter Frankland. After the war I tried to locate him, but was told that he was dead.

We were started under guard, on foot, along the road across the mountains. The roads were muddy and walking was bad. Our road took us through Culpepper Courthouse. As we tramped along, people, mostly girls, came to their doors to see the Yankees and some remarks were made, not very complimentary. As we passed one house, close to the street, a bunch of women stood on the porch, laughing and making fun of us. I passed within a few feet of them and raised my hat, with the best bow I could muster up. At which they yelled and called us some endearing names. While in the hands of the Confederates, who did the fighting, prisoners were treated well and humanely; but when back among the stay at home rangers, they could find no name bad enough for us.

Arriving at Gordonsville, we were put into a caboose, and started for Richmond by rail. I was put in charge of an officer, named Capt. Lee, who was returning from a leave of absence. We



sat together, talked and became quite friendly. On reaching Richmond, he regretted that the rules would not allow him to take me to the theatre, as he would like to do. I thanked him for the kindly expression, and we parted.

The local guard then took charge of us and we were marched to prison. The privates were taken to some other prison and I, to Libby. As I entered the door, the cry went up, "Fresh fish, fresh fish"; and men came flocking around, asking all kinds of questions, which were answered as best I could. The air seemed stifling and I made for an open window; but was taken hold of and jerked back in time to prevent being shot at, by the guard outside. The window frame showed bullet marks of the firing that had taken place and men had been shot for looking out.

One Sunday evening after dark, when the sound of the guards outside, calling out, "Post Number One, all's well. Post Number Two, all's well", had died away, there arose one of the prisoners, who began, "Oh, my comrades, is it well with your souls?" All along the line. From that he proceeded to preach a sermon, that touched the hearts of all who listened. He was a very eloquent talker, and became well known all over the country, as Chaplain McCabe. He died only recently, as Bishop McCabe, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, loved and honored by all who knew him.

I was fortunate in getting to Libby prison, not long before an exchange of prisoners took place, that was the last that occurred for many months. In the room where I was, were only Commissioned Officers. The place was about seventy-five by twenty-five feet in dimensions, and when we were all lying down, the floor was completely covered, with no room to walk about.

The day came for exchange and as the roll was called, each man stepped into the line. Every man was lined up except one poor fellow, who was left sitting alone in the corner and appeared to feel very badly. His name was Capt. McKee and he was said to have given offense to the Rebs. while Provo Marshall in Kentucky. Years after, there was a Capt. McKee, who represented Kentucky in Congress and I wondered if he was the same man.

When all ready we were marched out of the prison, each man being given a hunk of bread. My piece was too mouldy to eat and I threw it away for I knew we could all have a square meal on reaching City Point, some twenty miles away. We were loaded onto box cars, each car packed full inside; the roofs as well were covered with men. We travelled slowly, but it a few hours, came within sight of the Steamer, at the wharf, with the Stars and Stripes flying at the masthead. Then a cheer went up that woke the echoes. There was an abundance of hot coffee, sandwiches and other things to eat and everyone filled up to the limit. The steamer soon pulled out and we had a most enjoyable trip down the James and across the Chesapeake Bay to Annapolis, where after a days delay we were sent to Washington to join our Regiments.



I was glad to get back, but had nothing to regret, for in many ways it was an interesting trip, on which my usual good luck attended me.

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### **A SKIRMISH ON THE RAPIDAN.**

After the Battle of Gettysburg the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac followed and harassed the enemy until they had crossed the Potomac into Virginia. We then moved along the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains watching Lee's army and meeting some of them at the different gaps in the mountains where several skirmishes took place without much damage done on either side.

Lee's whole army was on the move going back to the south side of the Rapidan River where they had been before the Gettysburg Campaign began. We followed along and overtook them near Culpepper Courthouse where an engagement took place between the cavalry. They kept falling back as we pressed them pretty hard but made a stand in a little valley near the River. Here General Custer was hit on the leg by a piece of shell and rode about with his leg hanging out of the stirrup. He was not badly hurt but it laid him up for a while. In the valley was a small brick house from which the Rebel sharpshooters bothered us a good deal. Our cannon shelled it and drove them out. As our line advanced the house stood in my path and I entered it and saw a sight that made my heart sick. A shell had exploded in the room and torn things terribly. On a table lay the body of a little child, some four or five years old, quivering in death,—a nice white-haired, little fellow,—and over him stood the mother weeping and moaning as if her heart was breaking. As nothing could be done to help, I passed on trying to forget the picture. But I see it now almost as plainly as I saw it then, although fifty years have passed. Will there never be an end to war?

The lead horses were brought up and our regiment was then mounted and made a charge up a high hill where the enemy had made a stand. It was a steep climb and many of our saddles slipped back before we reached the top. The Rebs did not wait for us but lit out before we reached them. We were in bad shape and they could easily have driven us away had they opened on us with cannon. We were glad they didn't.

After the engagement at Culpepper we camped near Amisville, doing picket duty and keeping in touch with the enemy. Gen. Custer, with his Brigade, was sent out to feel of the enemy and proceeded to a place called Newbys Crossroads, where we ran into the flank of Gen. Hill's corps marching along past the Crossroads. Our Regiment, being in the advance, was dismounted and deployed as skirmishers. The enemy lined up along a fence on

the opposite side of a field and opened fire. They were behind a fence screened with brush so that we could not see much of them. I saw a man on horseback above the brush and taking good aim with my carbine resting on the fence, fired at him. He suddenly disappeared but might not have been hit. We finally climbed the fence and advanced about half way across the field and lay down in the grass, keeping up a slow fire. In the meantime the Rebs sent a force around us and took possession of the road by which we had come, so as to cut us off. When this was discovered, our line was called in and the Brigade was started back. The Rebs having possession of the road, we were compelled to take through the woods guided by a negro who knew the country. We succeeded in eluding the enemy and got out all right, leaving our killed and wounded behind. Next day, while on picket duty, I noticed a horse coming toward us with a man on his back and another man leading. It proved to be a farmer who was bringing in Lieut. Sabin badly wounded. Last year Lieut. Sabin was still living but a paralyzed cripple from the effect of his wound.

I remember while lying asleep on the road something cold lit on my mouth. Starting up, I found that a large toad had hopped onto my face. Had my mouth been open at the time and big enough to take in the toad, it would have been my first taste of toads' legs raw.

As winter approached our regiment went into winter quarters near Stevensburg and were employed till spring in picketing along the Rapidan River. Each officer took his turn at doing duty for a week, with some twenty men. One morning while on duty I noticed the Confederate officer riding along on the opposite bank. I rode down and called to him to come over and have breakfast with me. He hesitated, but after being assured that he would be allowed to come back at his pleasure, he came over. We rode back in the woods to my headquarters, dismounted, and sat down by the fire. I had a little whiskey in my canteen and offered it to him, but he refused. Suspecting the reason, I took a drink and offered it to him again, when he took a swigg and seemed to enjoy it. He stayed with us about an hour, took breakfast with us, enjoying a cup of real coffee,—something he had not tasted for years,—then mounting, I escorted him down to the river bank where we shook hands and parted. At times some spicy talk took place between the videttes across the stream. On one occasion, after the Battle of Chancellorsville, where Gen. Joe Hooker was badly beaten and where Gen. Stonewall Jackson was killed, a voice came from the Rebel side, "Hello! Yank, What's become of old Joe?" the Yank replied, "He's gone to Stonewall Jackson's funeral." Presently the Yank called out, "Hello! Reb! Why don't you fellers wear better clothes?" The Reb replied, "We don't dress up when we're killin' hogs."

Honors were easy.

There had been a sort of understanding between the pickets on both side that we would quit firing whenever a man showed his head, and there had sprung up a good deal of trading between the lines in tobacco and coffee. We needed tobacco and they coffee. The Commanding General got wind of it and issued an order that all dickering between the lines must stop. We called out to the Reds to look out for we had orders to fire. After that all intercourse ceased and firing was resumed whenever a man showed his head.

Our Regiment remained in camp at Stevensburg, doing picket duty on the Rapidan River, nothing special occurring until the last of February, when the greater portion of it went with Gen. Kilpatrick on his raid to Richmond, of which I have spoken elsewhere.

Our winter quarters at Stevensville were very comfortable. The officers all had log huts built with fireplaces and chimneys built of sticks and mud and the men had fixed up little shacks where they were protected from the cold. Some of the officers were good singers and we often met in the evening at one of their cabins and enjoyed some good old songs. A mixture, called milk punch, made of condensed milk and commissary whiskey, helped to enliven the occasion. Friendships were there formed that winter that will last until the end, and nowhere else than in the army during war can men become so well acquainted and know each other so thoroughly. During that winter our Brigade built a theatre in which amateur plays were given and some of the local talent was not to be sneezed at. The Brigade also gave a dance that was attended by Gen. Sheridan and other prominent officers of the Cavalry Corps. Music was furnished by the Brigade Band. Many officers had their wives in camp and they all were present at the Ball. It was a great success.

Our Brigade Band deserves a word or two. It was the custom of Gen. Custer to always have the band at the front in time of action, and the usual tune was "Garry-Owen." It was no unusual thing for the band to have their instruments damaged by the bullets of the enemy, and the band did much to inspire the boys during a fight. I have no doubt but the Indians on the Little Bighorn heard the strains of Garry-Owen before Custer and his little band of heroes were entirely wiped out on that bloody day in 1876, where the only living thing left of Custer's command was the wounded horse "Comanche" of Capt. Keogh, quietly feeding near the dead body of his master.

I well remember the day in 1863 when Custer was put in command of our Brigade. Many expressions of displeasure were heard because a yellow-haired boy of twenty-three was put in command of **us** who thought ourselves veterans. But it was not many days before we all felt that the yellow-haired boy was the peer of any man in the division, and such he proved himself to be.

## THE KILPATRICK RAID ON RICHMOND.

During the winter of 1863 and 4 Gen. Kilpatrick conceived the idea of making a sudden rush on Richmond with a body of cavalry, capture the city temporarily, release the Union prisoners and escape by way of the Peninsula and Yorktown.

On the 28th of February, 1864 selecting the best mounts of the Division, he left camp at Stevensburg, Va., and, by a forced march day and night in due season reached the outer works at Richmond.

There was an ambulance taken along loaded with combustible material for burning bridges, and there was also a large lot of printed copies of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which were scattered along the road whenever we came to a populated district.

The negroes turned out along the line of march to see us pass and many of them left their homes and followed us. I remember one very old negro woman who stood in the corner of the fence who, in a loud voice, was praying and preaching, calling down the blessings of God on Massa Lincoln and his army. She seemed to be terribly in earnest and knew we were her friends. Many hundreds of the poor creatures followed through mud and rain, keeping up with the column as best they could.

The fortifications were strong, but there were no troops defending them. We got inside the outer line of work and it looked for a time as if the city were unprotected, but we were not long left in doubt; very soon the shot and shell came ricochetting up the pike and we knew there would be no surprise. We were not within rifle shot, but could be reached by artillery fire.

Our Brigade was drawn up on the pike in column of fours with orders to charge into the city, make our way to Libby and other prisons, release all Union prisoners that we could find. We were to be supported by other troops.

I was serving for the time being on the Staff of Col. Sawyer, who commanded the Brigade in the absence of Gen. Custer, who was sent off in another direction in order to divert the attention of the enemy from the main attack.

We were well under way and had just started at a trot when orders came to halt and come back: Gen. Kilpatrick had changed his mind and decided not to make the attack. The enemy in the meantime had developed quite a strong force and the city bells were ringing and we could see that the inner works were filled with men and every preparation made to receive us.

On leaving Richmond after the war we came out by the same Brooke Pike and I was much interested in noting the defensive works along the road, which we would have to encounter in reaching the city, and we came to the conclusion that Kilpatrick was



wise in recalling the charge. We never could have made it without very heavy loss and maybe not then; his second thought was the best.

After deciding not to make the attack we were turned in the direction of the Chickahominy river and struck it at Meadow Bridge, which was defended by a party of cavalry with a section of artillery on the opposite side. The bridge was partly destroyed and the bed of the stream very wide and the mud very deep, so deep that several horses were mired and had to be abandoned or shot, the riders wading across as best they could. After a spirited little fight the enemy were driven away, the bridge repaired and we all crossed to the other side.

That night the command camped near Mechanicsville, a few miles from Richmond. The night was dark and raining, the men and horses were tired, we had been on the march continuously since leaving camp except for an hour occasionally to feed the horses.

Col. Sawyer and Staff took up their quarters in an old blacksmith shop, there was nothing of it but the shake roof, but it helped to keep off the rain. We hitched our horses to the fences and trees near by and laid down to rest without removing our clothes. We had just fallen into a sound sleep when awakened by the most terrific noise ever heard. The enemy had opened fire on our camp and the first shell struck the shake roof over our heads with an awful crash. We were up in a moment, but only half awake. Col. Sawyer ordered me to ride quickly over to the Fifth Michigan and tell Col. Gould to take his Regiment to the relief of the Seventh Michigan, whose camp was the most exposed to the attack. I stumbled out among the horses and took the first I came to. It proved to be the horse of a man with long legs for my feet could not reach the stirrups, but it had to go and I rode the rest of the night in that condition.

I found Col. Gould and gave him the order, but many of the men were still asleep and slow to wake up. Billy North, of Company "K" was the first to get his men ready so he and I started at the head of the Company. The night was black and the roads a sea of mud. Before going far we met men of the Seventh Michigan coming helter-skelter down the road in a panic and ran completely over and through us, scattering the Company so that it did not get together again until the morning. I was carrying a pistol in my right hand, pointing upwards, when a man ran squarely into me, my pistol struck him in the face and must have hurt him, he cried "Oh" and went on.

The main attack of the enemy had been on the camp of the Seventh Michigan. The Regiment was broken up, some of the men were killed and the Lieut. Col. in command was taken prisoner with quite a number of his men.



There was great confusion in our ranks and very little order. Had the enemy been strong enough and bold enough he might have played havoc with our whole command, but for a time he seemed satisfied with what he had done.

Our force was then put in motion on the road leading down to the Peninsula. Such a miserable, sleepy, wet, muddy, uncomfortable night's march I never experienced before or since. The men were sleepy, the horses tired and everyone in bad humor.

Col. Ulich Dahlgreen, a gallant young officer, who had lost a leg in the war, had been sent with five hundred men to cross the James River above Richmond and attack the city on the South side while our party struck it from the North.

He met with bad success, the negro whom he had picked up for a guide led him the wrong road. Several parties of the enemy were met with and Col. Dahlgreen was killed with many of his men, the rest scattered or taken prisoners. The negro guide, who had proved false, was hanged by Dahlgreen. Those of Dahlgreen's men who escaped came up with us the next day. We had halted to drive off an attack of the enemy when a rapid firing was heard that we could not understand. Presently a bunch of about fifty men came rushing through the enemy's lines firing and yelling like a lot of Comanches. They were what was left of the Dahlgreen party.

So, the expedition had started out with great hopes of success, had utterly failed to accomplish anything except to use up a division of cavalry for the time being.

Gen. Kilpatrick's idea was all right and would have succeeded if the other side hadn't objected.

"The best laid plans of mice and men  
Gang aft a'glee".

Our march was continued down the Peninsula until Yorktown was reached when we went into camp for a much needed rest.

In the course of a week or ten days we took steamer for Alexandria and from there marched back to our old camp at Stevensburg, mighty glad to get back. As we entered camp those who had not gone on the raid were lined up and received us singing "When Johnny comes marching home again forlorn, forlorn, we'll give him a hearty welcome then in a horn, in a horn".

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## THE TREVILIAN RAID AND VALLEY CAMPAIGN.

On the last days of May, 1864, the cavalry of the army of the Potomac left City Point on a raid in the direction of Lynchburg. The purposes of the expedition was to destroy the railroad and to meet the Command of Gen. Hunter, who was coming down from the valley. After a forced march we struck the Railroad at Trevilian Station and found it defended by a force of the enemy. We ran up

against a larger force than we had expected and the fighting was very severe for the day. We lost quite heavily in killed and prisoners.

During the fight Gen. Custer had forced his way through the lines of the enemy and had captured a lot of lead horses, but the Rebs closing in around him, he was compelled to give them up and look to his own safety. He was separated from our Command and his whereabouts was not known.

Gen. Torbert, who commanded the first Division told Capt. Bean, of his Staff, to ride out and find Custer and to see how he was getting along. I asked and received permission to accompany Bean on the ride. The morning was cloudy and mist lay low so we could not see very far. We started off at a good pace and had gone some two miles or more, when, coming to a sharp turn in the road, leading down into a little valley, we saw a party of cavalry at the foot of the grade, dismounted and standing to horse, about a hundred yards away. I had noticed a dun colored horse in the party, the same as was ridden by Capt. Judson, of the Fifth Michigan, and was saying to Bean that we were in great luck to find our friends so soon, when, bang, came a volley in our faces and several of the mounted came for us with a yell. It did not take us long to about face and light out at our best gait. Both of us being well mounted they soon gave up the chase, after half a mile or more.

On our return to headquarters we found that Custer had been heard from, that he had been quite roughly handled and had lost heavily in killed, wounded and prisoners.

In this affair Custer lost his headquarter wagons as well as his colored cook, Eliza. Some time later in the day she came limping down the road to the cheers of the Yankees, having escaped or had been liberated by the enemy. Eliza was well known by all the Brigade. After the war she continued with Custer until marrying a colored preacher, she retired to private life. She was still living some few years ago and visited Mrs. Custer in New York, by whom she was well thought of.

Our forces meeting with strong resistance, Sheridan concluded to withdraw after fighting all day until dark. The men were ordered to make camp fires as if we intended to remain. As soon as it was quite dark we began to pull out, the train being sent on ahead. The enemy kept up a steady cannonading. Four of us were standing behind a low railroad embankment watching the course of the shells in the air when one struck a rail directly in front of us, and exploding sent the fragments over our heads, but injuring no one. Only for the protection of that rail, some of us would have been wiped out. The killed were left unburied and the wounded, who were unable to travel, were left in field hospitals with a number of surgeons to care for them. It was a sad ending, but the enemy were too strong for us and we got the worst of it. The expedition was

a failure, except for the destroying of railroads and the damage done the enemy.

Gen. Hunter, whom we were to meet coming from the valley, also met with strong resistance and had to turn back after losing many of his men. He ran short of supplies and the enemy continually harassing him, he returned to the valley by a circuitous route after much suffering and heavy loss. The wonder is that after nearly four years of war the enemy was still strong enough to meet us at every point and put up a spirited fight.

After pulling out from Trevilian Station our Command took the back road in the direction of Whitehouse Landing, on the Pamunkey River. The enemy did not discover our departure until next morning and we had several hours the start of them. They followed in the morning. We were not molested during the march.

Arriving at the Whitehouse Landing, we found there a Brigade of colored troops, guarding the wagon trains of the army of the Potomac. A party of the enemy had reached there before us and had made an attack on the place, but were held off by the coons. On our arrival the Rebs pulled off.

I was sent off on the skirmish line to see how things were and found the colored troops holding the ground as well as white troops could do. Although there were but few white officers on the ground, the men were standing fast and doing their duty. My opinion of colored troops rose a point or two by what I saw there.

Lying at the wharf was a U. S. gun boat with Bob Wagstaff as one of the officers. As our clothes were worn and dirty, he fitted out many of the Michigan boys with pants and shirts. Gen. Torbert and Staff coming in for a share. On leaving the landing we were like a lot of sailors on horse back.

After resting for two days we were started across to the James River, escorting the immense wagon train. Our Division went with the train and Gregg's Division took a parallel road to the right of us. We were not attacked, but Gregg had quite a severe engagement with the enemy, who were anxious to capture the long train.

The Command reached the James River in good time without losing a wagon. The trains covered many miles of road and it was a wonder some of them were not lost.

We crossed the James at Haxoll's Landing and joined the army of the Potomac where we went into camp for a much needed rest, as the horses needed shoeing and the men were pretty well worn out.

In the meantime the army had gotten together and established their lines in front of Petersburg, preparing for a siege that was to last for nine months and was to see some of the hardest fighting before Lee was compelled to give up the position and begin the march that was to end at Appomattox Courthouse.

The cavalry had now a season of rest with not much to do except to watch the flanks of the Army and now and then a short scouting expedition. Great preparations were being made for some important movement, we knew not what.

The Burnside Mine was about ready to explode and the second Corps with a division of cavalry was sent across the James to Deep Bottom to create a diversion and compel Lee to detach a force in that direction and to weaken his lines in front of Burnside. After engaging the attention of the enemy, and meeting with a strong force, we returned to the South side of the James a few hours after the Burnside Mine had exploded. As we marched along in the rear of the army we could see the dead and wounded lying in the hot sun, just where they fell. It was terrible. These wounded lay as they fell for more than twenty-four hours without any care or attention, many of them dying in the meantime. The whole affair was mismanaged in some way. But where the blame rested was hard to decide. One thing was fairly proven, that was that the colored Division engaged did its work as well as the white men who took part in the fight, but both might have done better had they been properly led.

Both Armies having settled down to work, Gen. Lee sent Gen. Early with his Corps of Infantry up to the Shenandoah Valley to make a demonstration on the Capitol, and to compel Gen. Grant to detach from his front at Petersburg. Early pushed down the Valley, met and defeated Lew Wallace at the Monocacy River and threatened the Capitol at Washington. Grant sent the Sixth Corps to the rescue and it arrived just in time to drive Early off and relieve the Capitol from attack.

Early fell back and crossed the Potomac into Virginia, but showed no disposition to leave that part of the country. He sent raiding parties across the river to harass the people and carry off livestock and supplies for his Army. It was on one of these expeditions that the Town of Chambersburg was burned because the people could not, or would not, raise the amount of money or supplies that he had assessed against the City. I think this was the only occasion on which a town was deliberately burned by the enemy on either side, and for this there was no excuse.

The Shenandoah Valley had been a source of great trouble and expense to us during the war. Gen. Grant seems to have come to the conclusion to clean it up effectually and make it impossible for the enemy to subsist there as they had been doing. To that end he sent Gen. Sheridan with two Divisions of Cavalry, the Eighth and the Nineteenth Corps—who came from West Virginia—and the Sixth Corps that was already there, making an Army of some thirty-five thousand men. Sheridan's orders were to destroy Early's Army and make the Valley untenable for an Army of the enemy to subsist there. Before he got through with it, the Valley was ruined. In



Sheridan's own words, it was left in such a condition that a crow could not fly over it without he carried his supplies with him. It was the most thorough and effective campaign that Virginia had known during the war. All haystacks, mills and barns were destroyed, as well as all organized bodies of the enemy and nothing was left for an army to live on. It was terrible and seemed cruel, but then, as Sherman has said, "War is hell."

On or about the first of August, 1864, our cavalry took boats for Alexandria. We left just in time to avoid the great explosion that took place at City Point a day or two after we had gone. Some enemy had placed powder or dynamite so that it exploded, killing and wounding many men and much shipping lying at the wharf was destroyed. Had this occurred when we were embarking the loss of life would have been terrible.

We arrived at Alexandria at due time, went to Harpers Ferry and beyond to Halltown where we went into camp, remaining there for some time, scouting and picketing the country round about.

Early's Army lay in and about the town of Winchester while we occupied the line of the Opequon River some miles away. Sheridan was watching the enemy and biding his time to strike, and it came very soon.

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## THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

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### Three Years of Disasters and Defeats, followed by Brilliant Victories

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**Sheridan's Secret Service Corps—Miss Rebecca Wright, and Her Valuable Information—Quiet Preceding the Battle. Sheridan Gets Ready to Strike as Soon as He Receives Miss Wright's Letter.**

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By **JOHN McELROY.**

#### SHERIDAN AND HIS SECRET SERVICE.

In his "Personal Memoirs," Sheridan gives an interesting account of the formation of his celebrated set of scouts which kept him supplied with accurate information which he could not have obtained from the ordinary sources of rebel deserters and loyal citizens.

"While occupying the ground between Clifton and Berryville, I felt the need of an efficient body of scouts to collect information regarding the enemy, for the defective intelligence establishment with which I started out from Harper's Ferry early in August had not proved satisfactory. I therefore began to organize my scouts on a system which I hoped would give better results than had the



method hitherto pursued in the Department, which was to employ on this service doubtful citizens and Confederate deserters. If these should turn out untrustworthy, the mischief they might do us gave me grave apprehension, and I finally concluded that those of our own soldiers who should volunteer for the delicate and hazardous duty would be the most valuable material, and decided that they should have a battalion organization and be commanded by an officer, Maj. H. K. Young, of the 1st R. I. Cav. These men were disguised in Confederate uniforms whenever necessary, were paid from the Secret Service Fund in proportion to the value of the intelligence they furnished, which often stood us in good stead in checking the forays of Gilmore, Mosby, and other irregulars. Beneficial results came from the plan in many other ways, too, and particularly so when in a few days two of my scouts put me in the way of getting news conveyed from Winchester. They had learned that just outside of my lines near Millwood, there was living an old colored man who had a permit from the Confederate Commander to go into Winchester and return three times a week for the purpose of selling vegetables to the inhabitants. The scouts had sounded this man and, finding him both loyal and shrewd, suggested that he might be made useful to us within the enemy's lines; and the proposal struck me as feasible, provided there could be found in Winchester some reliable person who would be willing to co-operate and correspond with me."

#### **Gen. Sheridan and Miss Wright.**

Sheridan's story of how he received invaluable information from Miss Rebecca Wright is so interesting that the telling cannot be improved up. In his "Personal Memoirs" he says:

"I asked Gen. Crook, who was acquainted with many of the Union people of Winchester, if he knew of such a person, and he recommended a Miss Rebecca Wright, a young lady whom he had met there before the battle of Kernstown, who, he said, was a member of the Society of Friends and the teacher of a small private school. He knew she was faithful and loyal to the Government, and thought she might be willing to render us assistance, but he could not be certain of this, for on account of her well-known loyalty she was under constant surveillance. I hesitated at first but finally, deciding to try it, dispatched the two scouts to the old negro's cabin, and they brought him to my headquarters late that night. I was soon convinced of the negro's fidelity, and, asking him if he was acquainted with Miss Rebecca Wright, of Winchester, he replied that he knew her well. Thereupon I told him what I wished to do, and after a little persuasion he agreed to carry a letter to her on his next marketing trip. My message was prepared by writing it on tissue paper, which was then compressed into a small pellet, and protected by wrapping it in tin-foil, so that it could be safely carried in the man's mouth. The probability of his being searched

when he came to the Confederate picket-line was not remote, and in such event he was to swallow the pellet. The letter appealed to Miss Wright's loyalty and patriotism, and requested her to furnish me with information regarding the strength and condition of Early's army. The letter was as follows:

“ ‘Sept. 15, 1864.

“ ‘I learn from Maj. Gen. Crook that you are a loyal lady and still love the old Flag. Can you inform me of the position of Early's forces, the number of divisions in his army, and the strength of any or all of them and his probable or reported intentions? Have any more troops arrived from Richmond, or are any more coming, or reported to be coming?

“ ‘I am, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

“ ‘P. H. SHERIDAN, Maj.-Gen. Commanding.

“ ‘You can trust the bearer.’ ”

The night before the negro started one of the scouts placed the odd-looking communication in his hands, with renewed injunctions as to secrecy and promptitude. Early the next morning it was delivered to Miss Wright, with an intimation that a letter of importance was inclosed in the tin-foil, the negro telling her at the same time that she might expect him to call for a message in reply before his return home. At first Miss Wright began to open the pellet nervously, but when told to be careful and to preserve the foil as a wrapping for her answer, she proceeded slowly and carefully, and when the note appeared intact the messenger retired, remarking again that in the evening he would come for an answer.

“On reading my communication Miss Wright was much startled by the perils it involved, and hesitatingly consulted her mother, but her devoted loyalty soon silenced every other consideration, and the brave girl resolved to comply with my request, notwithstanding it might jeopardize her life. The evening before a convalescent Confederate officer had visited her mother's house, and in conversation about the war had disclosed the fact that Kershaw's Division of Infantry and Cutshaw's Battalion of Artillery had started to rejoin Gen. Lee. At the time Miss Wright heard this she attached little if any importance to it, but now she perceived the value of the intelligence and, as her first venture, determined to send it to me at once, which she did in the following letter, with a promise that in the future she would with great pleasure continue to transmit information by the negro messenger.

#### **Miss Wright's Reply to Gen. Sheridan's Note:**

“ ‘Sept. 16, 1864.

“ ‘I have no communication whatever with the rebels, but will tell you what I know. The division of Gen. Kershaw's and Cutshaw's artillery, 12 guns and men, Gen Anderson commanding, have been sent away, and no more are expected, as they cannot be spared from Richmond. I do not know how the troops are situated, but the

force is much smaller than represented. I will take pleasure hereafter in learning all I can of their strength and position, and the bearer may call again.

“Very respectfully yours,

“ \* \* \* \* \*

### **Momentous Information.**

“Miss Wright’s answer proved of more value to me than she anticipated, for it not only quieted the conflicting reports concerning Anderson’s Corps, but was most important in showing positively that Kershaw was gone, and this circumstance led, three days later, to the battle of the Opequon, or Winchester as it has been officially called. Word to the effect that some of Early’s troops were under orders to return to Petersburg and would start back at the first favorable opportunity had been communicated to me already from many sources, but we had not been able to ascertain the date for their departure. Now that they had actually started, I decided to wait before offering battle until Kershaw had gone so far as to preclude his return, feeling confident that my prudence would be justified by the improved chances of victory; and then, besides, Mr. Stanton kept reminding me that positive success was necessary to counteract the political dissatisfaction existing in some of the Northern States. This course was advised and approved by Gen. Grant, but even with his powerful backing it was difficult to resist the persistent pressure of those whose judgment, warped by their interests in the Baltimore & Ohio railroad, was often confused and misled by stories of scouts (sent out from Washington), averring that Kershaw and Fitzhugh Lee had returned to Petersburg, Breckinridge to Southwestern Virginia, and at one time even maintaining that Early’s whole army was east of the Blue Ridge, and its commander himself at Gordonsville.

“During the inactivity prevailing in my army for the 10 days preceding Miss Wright’s communication the infantry was quiet, with the exception of Getty’s Division, which made a reconnoissance to the Opequon, and developed a heavy force of the enemy at Edward’s Corners. The cavalry, however, was employed a good deal in this interval skirmishing—heavily at times—to maintain a space about six miles in width between the hostile lines, for I wished to control this ground so that when I was released from the instructions of Aug. 12 I could move my men into position for attack without the knowledge of Early. The most noteworthy of these mounted encounters was that of McIntosh’s Brigade, which captured the 8th S. C. at Abraham’s Creek, Sept. 13.

“It was the evening of Sept. 16 that I received from Miss Wright positive information that Kershaw was in march toward Front Royal on his way by Chester Gap to Richmond. Concluding that this was my opportunity, I at once resolved to throw my whole force into Newton the next day, but a dispatch from Gen. Grant

directing me to meet him at Charleston, whither he was coming to consult with me, caused me to defer action until after I should see him. In our resulting interview at Charlestown, I went over the situation very thoroughly, and pointed out with so much confidence the chances of a complete victory should I throw my army across the Valley pike near Newtown that he fell in with the plan at once, authorized me to resume the offensive, and to attack Early as soon as I deemed it most propitious to do so; and although before leaving City Point he had outlined certain operations for my Army, yet he neither discussed nor disclosed his plans, my knowledge of the situation striking him as being so much more accurate than his own."

Grant, in his "Memoirs," refers to this as follows:

"Before starting I had drawn up a plan of campaign for Sheridan, which I had brought with me; but seeing that he was so clear and so positive in his views, and so confident of success, I said nothing about this, and did not take it out of my pocket."

Sheridan goes on to say that:

"The interview over, I returned to my army to arrange for its movement toward Newtown, but while busy with these preparations a report came to me from Gen. Averell which showed that Early was moving with two divisions of infantry toward Martinsburg. This considerably altered the state of affairs, and I now decided to change my plan and attack at once the two divisions remaining about Winchester and Stephenson's Depot, and, later, the two sent to Martinsburg, the disjointed state of the enemy giving me an opportunity to take him in detail, unless the Martinsburg column should be returned by forced marches."

There lived in Winchester at that time a Quaker family named Wright. The family was loyal except the youngest daughter. Her beau was in the Rebel service, Miss Becky, the eldest daughter obtained some information that she thought was important. She wrote it on a sheet of tissue paper, wrapped it in foil, put it in the mouth of a trusty negro and sent it to Gen. Sheridan. The information contained in that note brought on the Battle of Winchester September 19th, 1864.

After the war Gen. Sheridan presented Becky Wright\* with a fine gold watch and also procured for her a position in the Treasury Department at Washington. During the winter of 1864-5 I roomed at the home of the Wrights while acting on the Division Staff and knew the family real well. Miss Becky was a quiet, sober, thought-

#### **Mrs. Bonsall Dead.**

Mrs. Rebecca Wright Bonsall, said to have given Gen. Phil Sheridan the information which led to a victory for the Union forces at Winchester, died at her home, American University Park, Washington, D. C., recently. Before marriage Mrs. Bonsall was a school teacher in Virginia. A young Confederate officer visiting her gave her vital information of the Southern forces. A representative of Gen. Sheridan later visited Mrs. Bonsall, then Miss Wright, and requested the information, which she gave. Subsequently Mrs. Bonsall came to Washington and was given a position in the Treasury Department, where she served until recently. She was 71 years of age at the time of her death.



ful girl who kept her own counsel. She seemed to be of more than average intelligence. For aught I know she may be still alive, but hardly that as she was no spring chicken when I knew her and fifty years have come and gone since then.

I have pleasant recollections of Miss Becky Wright and hope her life has been filled with joy.

On the morning of September 19th, 1864, we were in the saddle by daylight and the forward movement was begun. We had not far to go until the enemy was met and the engagement was opened. We gradually pushed them back and soon ran into Breckenridge's Corps, that had been recalled from Martinsburg by Gen. Early. We struck them pretty hard and followed them to their fortifications at Winchester.

Early's Army was now in front of us and behind their works, awaiting our attack. Sheridan's force was quickly getting together and when all up, our lines confronted Winchester in the form of a bow. The country round about was almost entirely clear of woods, and from any part of the field one could see what was going on. The enemy had not long to wait. Sheridan with his usual dash, ordered an advance along the whole line and the sight was grand. Away to the left the line of Blue was pushing on under fire, on the left of the Rebel line a fort was being hotly attacked and one could see the men advance, now and then being pushed back for a time, but going at it again with new vigor. On our right the cavalry was massed. Presently ten thousand troopers went forward on a charge with sabres gleaming in the sun and with a cheer that would enthuse a dead man. The scene was grand beyond description. Their line was broken and the rout began. The battle was won, but the pursuit was kept up till darkness closed the engagement. This was the first real victory in the Valley and was to be followed a month later by even a greater one. Early now fell back up the Valley as far as Fisher's Hill and there made a stand. I am a little in doubt if this was before or after Cedar Creek fight, but at all events it took place. Sheridan attacked at Fisher's Hill. While this was going on, Gen. Torbert with a Division of Cavalry was sent up through the Luray Valley to get behind Early and cut off his retreat. We proceeded up the Valley until met by a force of Rebel cavalry, who had taken position in a gap in the mountains. They were strongly posted and we were unable to dislodge them. I have always thought that had we shown more enterprise and push we might have driven them away. We fell back, sending our ambulances with the wounded in advance, guarded by a company of regular cavalry under command of Lieut. McMasters. They had not proceeded far when the train was attacked by a party of Mosby's men, who robbed many of the wounded men in the ambulances. McMasters coming up, the Rebs were driven off. In the pursuit McMasters got ahead of his men and was captured. His men coming up pressed the enemy so hard that they could not get away with their prisoner, and



rather than give him up, they deliberately shot him using his own pistol for the purpose as he afterward told.

McMasters lived long enough to tell how it happened and then died. He was a very popular young fellow, well known and liked by everyone, and the manner of his killing made our people very wroth.

During the affair our men captured some half a dozen of the enemy and they were shown no mercy. Some of them were told to run and as they ran were fired upon until they fell. I particularly remember the two who were brought to Gen. Torbert, who told Capt. Bean of the Staff to take them over to the woods and hang them. Bean didn't like the job. Taking them aside, each by himself, he suggested to them that if they were willing to give information that would be of use to us in capturing some of Mosby's Command perhaps their lives would be spared. Each for himself replied that he had taken an oath to support the Confederacy and would rather die than violate it. So they were taken to the woods and hanged. I stood at Bean's elbow and heard part of the conversation between him and the prisoners. I was filled with admiration for the brave young fellows and I was very sorry to see them hanged, for the country could ill afford to lose men of such stuff as they proved themselves to be.

It was a very unfortunate affair and cost us in the end many valuable lives. For a long time after that event, men captured by Mosby's Command were hanged and horribly disfigured, in retaliation for what was done that day at Front Royal. Some days after the event we passed by the place and the men were still hanging. I was surprised to see how small they looked, they seemed no bigger than boys although they were both good sized men when living. The State of Virginia has recently built a monument to the memory of the men who were shot and hanged that day at Front Royal.

In the early fall of 1864 Sheridan, with his cavalry, pushed on up the Valley to Staunton. After lying there a day or two the whole Command was again headed down the Valley, the way we had come. Gen. Torbert with the first Division took the Pike, while Gen. Custer with the third Division took the back road. The two roads run parallel at a distance from each other of from two to four miles. It was on this march that all the barns, mills, haystacks, etc., were burned and all the livestock driven off. During the first day's march Gen. Torbert ordered me to ride over the back road and see how Custer was getting along. I started alone but soon overtook a party of about twenty men belonging to Custer's Division, who were going back to join their Regiment. I was well pleased at meeting them, for I saw before me a lonesome and dangerous ride. The country was full of small parties of the enemy watching our movements and picking up any stragglers they could find.

We followed a road through a wooded country. It bore marks of cavalry having lately passed over it. I stopped at a shack by

the roadside and asked the woman what cavalry had lately passed along. She replied "Ours". "How long ago had they gone by?" "Oh, just a little while." This looked rather squally but we kept on until coming to a clear place, the officer and myself crept up a small hill and saw that we were at the back road, but nothing was to be seen of Custer's Command. Instead we could see small groups of Rebs, sauntering up and down the road. We could not decide whether Custer had gone by or had not yet reached that point.

As we could not remain where we were we concluded to strike back diagonally across the hill and through the woods in the direction of our own Command. After passing over the first range of hills we struck a road leading in the right direction and followed it. We were going along quietly when there came out of the woods on our left a bunch of some fifteen or twenty Rebs, shooting and yelling like Indians. For a moment it looked like our men would stampede but, taking a second thought, they lined up along the fence and opened fire. The Rebs, seeing that we could not be stampeded, pulled off and followed at a distance. The country round about was ablaze with burning barns and haystacks and the Rebs were in bad humor and prisoners taken by them would be apt to be treated pretty badly. We later ascertained that some stragglers picked up by them had been thrown into the burning barns and it was no good time to be taken prisoner. Our little party realized that.

In due time we reached our own lines. On reporting to Gen. Torbert, he inquired how many men I had taken with me. He remarked that I ought to have taken at least a hundred.

The Cavalry fell back in the Vicinity of Strasburg and went into camp. The Confederate General Rosser had followed us with his Division of Cavalry and was camped a few miles away. Gen. Sheridan ordered Gen. Torbert to take his cavalry out and whip that fellow. By daylight next morning we were in the saddle and started for the enemy. We met them at a stream called Tomsbrook and the charge was at once sounded. At the first onset the enemy gave way and the race began that ended near the town of Woodstock, some twenty miles away. A cleaner piece of work was never accomplished. We took many prisoners and everything the Rebs had on wheels.

During the muss Gen. Torbert sent me back to bring up a regiment from a mile or two in the rear. Riding along, I espied three men, clad in our blue overcoats. They came up out of the brush and beckoned me to come to them. As the enemy was badly scattered, I thought these were three of our men who had corralled some Rebs in the brush and wanted me to help take them in. So, turning I rode in their direction, while at the same time they kept coming toward me. As we got nearer together, I noticed that the foremost man held a pistol in his hand, which he raised and pointed at me; but not a word was said. Having a pistol in my boot-leg, I jerked 't out. Just as I was raising it, my hat flew off and I threw up the

pistol hand. The pistol went through a hole in the top of my hat. In that position I fired, he also firing at the same moment. Somewhat surprised I turned and rode down the hill until seeing that I was not followed, I stopped and went back to the top of the hill, where I watched the men ride down a steep incline to a meadow below, and fording the river, make off at their best speed. I sat and cussed myself for not having the nerve to take those men prisoners, as all they wanted was to get away and they might have been taken.

This cavalry fight was the most complete clean-up that had yet occurred and taught the enemy that the Yankee Cavalry was to be reckoned with and was no longer the joke it had been in the early part of the war. The Shenandoah Valley was most effectively cleaned up as the storehouses of the Confederate Army. Everything in the way of supplies was destroyed and as Sheridan said, "A crow could not cross the Valley without carrying its own supplies."

Our Command lay in the Shenandoah Valley during the fall, with no active operations except an occasional scouting expedition up the Valley. During one of these expeditions, I, being unwell, was left in charge of the camp at headquarters. Gen. Custer, who had left his wife at his headquarters on the back road asked me to ride over every day and see that she wanted for nothing. So I found it my pleasant duty to visit Mrs. Custer every day for a week and have a short chat with her. She was an extremely pleasant lady. During one of my visits she told me that the first time she ever saw the General was while he was home on leave from West Point, where he was a cadet and he was so drunk that the sidewalk was not wide enough for him. I thought that rather singular as we all knew that the General now did not touch a drop of ardent spirits; no doubt, owing to the influence of his good wife, he lived and died a total abstainer.

The balance of the winter was passed in the Valley until the following February when the cavalry broke camp for the overland march to join the Army of the Potomac and bid farewell to the Valley where we had spent a pleasant time.

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### **SOME MEMORIES of the WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN.**

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In the spring of 1864, General Grant, being now in command of all the armies of the United States, made his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac, and it was expected that there would soon be something doing, and there was. Immediately preparations were set on foot for a forward movement. All the sick and disabled were sent to the rear. Arms and equipments were put in shape, and everything made ready for a move. General Lee, from his signal

station on Clark's Mountain, could overlook our camps across the Rapidan River, and of course, knew what was going on about as well as we did. On the night of May third, tents were struck, wagons were loaded, and by daylight on the morning of the fourth, the Army of the Potomac, led by the cavalry, took up the march headed for that fateful country called the Wilderness.

Before starting, an order was handed me directing me to report for duty at division headquarters, so taking a roll of my blankets and a man to take care of my horse, I reported to the Adjutant-General, who informed me that I was detailed to act as Aide to General Torbert, who commanded the division. Thus it came about that I was assigned to duty as a staff officer that was to continue until the end of the war.

Our division crossed the Rapidan at Germania Ford and pushed out in the direction of Todd's Tavern, where we met a body of the enemy's cavalry and had a sharp conflict in which we seemed to have a little the best of it, but nothing to boast of. During the fight, the body of a regular army officer was carried by on a stretcher. One who knew him remarked that the dead officer had predicted that in this campaign he would win a star or a coffin. Poor fellow, let us hope that the star awaited him on the other side.

In the meantime our infantry had been crossing the river at the different fords above and below and heading inland for Chancellorsville, where General Hooker had fought the year before and where General Stonewall Jackson had been killed. It was a most discouraging country to fight in, mostly covered with a thick growth of stunted pines and brush, with only here and there a small clearing. The timber was so dense that one could see scarcely more than a few rods in any direction. How the General in command could keep in touch with every part of the army and the immense wagon trains, and know at all times just where they were, was something to be wondered at.

The infantry fighting for the first few days was very severe and the Yanks got a little the worst of it, but Grant was not easily discouraged and seemed never to have lost his nerve for a moment. During the heaviest fighting we passed him as he sat leaning against the foot of a tree, quietly smoking, and as composed as if nothing was happening, while all around him was bustle and excitement. I would give something for a photograph of him as he sat that day.

The cavalry, being at a disadvantage in the wooded country, Sheridan said to Meade, that if he were permitted, he would take the cavalry out and whip General Stuart and the Confederate cavalry. Meade told Grant of this, who said, "Let him do it." Sheridan got the cavalry together out in a clear country, at a farm called Silvers, and started in the direction of Richmond. The first place we struck was Beaver Dam Station on the Virginia Central Railroad. Our advance appeared there suddenly and captured a train of cars loaded



with Yankee prisoners on their way to Richmond. There were several hundred of them—among them was my friend Billy Jacklin. We destroyed the station, with the train of cars, as well as a large amount of Confederate supplies, and tore up several miles of railroad, and smashed things generally. We then resumed the march to Richmond, followed by General Stuart and his cavalry, who continually harassed our rear, but was paid little attention to until we arrived at a place called Yellow Tavern, some six miles from Richmond on the Brook Pike. Here we stopped to give battle to the enemy. The fight lasted several hours, during which General Stuart was killed, and his force defeated. During the fight I noticed a party of mounted men ride up to the edge of the woods with a headquarters flag. Suddenly there was a commotion among them, several dismounting in haste—then they disappeared. I am quite sure that it was at that moment that General Stuart was struck by the ball that killed him.

General Stuart was one of the great cavalry generals developed by the war. He may not have been so determined a fighter as Sheridan was, still he was a brilliant soldier, and had the opposing forces been equal, there is no telling what might have happened.

We lost quite heavily in killed and wounded. Among the latter was Captain Axtell, with whom I had served in the same company. He was very severely hurt, and was left in a house with other wounded. Before leaving, I went in to bid him good-bye, and found him feeling cheerful. He said to me: "This may be the last of me. If I get well, all right, if I don't, it's all right." I shook his hand, and bade him a last farewell. He died in Libby prison a few days later.

Sheridan now moved against the defenses of Richmond, but found them so well defended that he pulled off, and, after communicating with General Butler at Bermuda Hundreds, started back to join the Army of the Potomac. The expedition was a success and the enemy was severely punished. Their leading general was killed and a large amount of property destroyed that they could not well afford to lose.

On our return to the Army we were kept constantly on the move from point to point in advance of the infantry. While Grant was making his several movements on the left flank, the cavalry was sent ahead to secure the different places, and hold them until the infantry came up.

Our next serious engagement was at a place called Haw's Shop on the South Anna River. We fought on foot, as the country was thickly wooded and the brush so thick that the lines came pretty close together without being seen. We could hear the commands of the rebel officers, and presume they also could hear ours. Our losses were very severe and many graves were made around the little church in the woods. Here Captain David Oliphant was badly wounded. We sat on a log and smoked until his turn came

to be operated on. I held the chloroform to his face until he became unconscious, then patting him on the head, I bade him a last goodbye. He died on the way to Fredericksburg. He was one of the best officers in the regiment and his loss was sorely felt. It was rather discouraging to see one's friends and companions shot down one by one and yet no end of the war in sight. That's what jars a fellows nerve.

The command then started for Cold Harbor, and on the way met the enemy's cavalry at a little church where a slight engagement took place. It was here that my friend, Captain Safford got a ball through his cap while leading his company in the fight. It spoiled the cap but did no damage to the head except removing a tuft of hair.

On reaching Cold Harbor, a force of cavalry was found defending the place. After a fight which lasted a couple of hours or more we drove them out. By some mistake we left the crossroads, one part of the division going out on the Mechanicsville road, and Devon's Brigade, camping a couple of miles away on another road. During the night orders came to go back and occupy Cold Harbor. General Torbert sent me to call Devons. It was a lonesome ride on a dark night and over the ground where the fight took place, with the dead lying about where they had fallen. In passing the little schoolhouse which had been used as a hospital, where I had seen a pile of arms and legs that reached almost up to the window, a sort of chill crept up my spine and the surroundings were not cheerful. But what bothered me most was that I would have to approach Devons' Brigade from the outside and might be mistaken for a rebel. I finally came upon the outer vidette sitting his horse under a tree and sound asleep. The road was soft and muddy and I had come upon him quietly and had to touch him before he awoke. Men were almost worn out and there was some excuse for the man being asleep on his post.

The next morning the whole command was back at the crossroads and in a short time the advance of Lee's Infantry made its appearance, when a brisk fight began and kept getting worse until it looked as if we would be driven away. About noon the head of the Sixth Corps came up and took our places and we pulled out. During the morning we had lost quite heavily. Among the killed was Captain Billy Brevoort, of the First Michigan.

For the next two or three days the whole forces of Grant and Lee were pitted against each other, and the fighting was the most costly in men of any engagement during the campaign except Spotsylvania Courthouse. The cavalry was not in it except on the outskirts.

It was now the first of June. Since starting on May fourth there had been more or less fighting every day. During all that time we had been separated from our baggage with no change of clothing, not even socks. The cavalry top boots, covering heavy

woolen socks, formed a nice, warm breeding place for graybacks and they made the most of it until we reached the James River, where they went to feed the fishes.

Some time after the Battle of Cold Harbor, our division passed over the ground on our way to another expedition, and we found the dead still lying scattered about. Some had been drawn up side by side but were still uncovered. The stench was terrible. Hogs had torn many of the bodies, and the ravens were having a feast. Here was the very skeleton of war laid bare, stripped of all its pomp and glitter, and a gruesome sight it was. In it was none of the glory of war.

During the battle men were seen to write their names and regiment and pin it on their clothes so that their bodies could be identified. Soldiers have a horror of a nameless grave, but these poor fellows had no grave at all.

Some years after the close of the war, the government gathered many of their bones and buried them in some national cemetery to swell the number of the unknown.

"On Fame's eternal camping ground  
Their silent tents are spread,  
And glory guards with solemn round  
The bivouac of the dead."

The Battle of Cold Harbor was the last engagement during the Wilderness Campaign, and our side did certainly get the worst of it. Grant assaulted their lines time and again but could not budge them. Lee held a strong position and strongly did he defend it. Grant, in his memoirs, states that the last assault on Cold Harbor was one that he would not order had he to fight the battle again. He finally slipped away and left Lee in some doubt as to where he had gone, but soon made his appearance and crossed the James River to begin the siege of Petersburg, and Lee was not long in following and appeared in his front slightly disfigured but still in the ring. It was surprising that after thirty days of constant hammering, the enemy could meet us at every point and put up a gallant fight. Their valor deserved a better cause. Lee at no time showed greater ability than during the Wilderness Campaign. Our losses during that campaign almost equalled in number the Army of Northern Virginia.

While camped on the James River, I paid a visit to my regiment. It was commanded at that time by Captain William Rolls, who was the senior officer left for duty. He told me that seventy-five was all the men he could muster. Of course, the absent officers and men were not all dead, but many had been killed and wounded and more disabled from one cause and another. Rolls took me to the picket line and showed me his horse. Somebody had shaved his tail and the poor animal looked as if he felt the disgrace and Rolls was boiling over. I pitied the man who did the job if he was ever found out.

The Cavalry now camped on the James River for a season of rest and to recruit up for the work that was still before us.

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### **FROM THE VALLEY TO APPOMATTOX.**

Early in the spring of 1865 Gen. Sheridan, having cleaned up all organized bodies of the enemy in the Shenandoah Valley, started with the Cavalry from Stanton over the mountains to Charlottesville, then down across the country to James River, over muddy roads, sometimes traveling on the towpath of the James River Canal, until finally forming a junction with the Army of the Potomac at City Point.

After a few days rest to recruit from the effects of a long march he was ordered with the whole force of cavalry to begin the final campaign that was to end in the surrender of Lee's Army.

Pushing out to Ream's Station and following the railroad to Nottaway Courthouse, he took the road to Dinwiddie Courthouse, camping near that place. While on the march I was told to remain at the cross roads near Gravelly-run and direct Gen. Custer to the right road when he came up. I took my station and waited, expecting that Gen. Custer would come along in an hour or two. Darkness came and no Custer. The rain was pouring down and the night was black. Feeling sleepy, I took two rails and laid them up against the fence, the other end on the ground; and lying down upon them with the bridle rein over my arm, fell asleep and lay there until daylight came. It was a lonesome night, only a few miles from the Rebel lines, and the rain never stopped for a minute. An hour or two after daylight Custer came along and I proceeded to join Gen. Merritt whom I found near Dinwiddie Courthouse.

The following morning the whole force advanced in the direction of Five-forks. Arriving near that point, the enemy came out in force, attacked us strongly in the woods and drove us back in some confusion. Especially was that the case with the Division commanded by Gen. Devens. During the mussy, Gen. Merritt told me to ride over to Gen. Devens, see how he was getting along, and say to Gen. Davies, (who had a Brigade under Devens) that if in his judgment it became necessary, he was to take command of the Division and get it out of the scrape it was in. However, it did not seem necessary and they got out all right with some loss. The next morning, April 1st, 1865, the advance was again made in the direction of Five-forks, and it was found that the Enemy had retired behind his works there. The cavalry advanced to within firing distance of their works and, keeping up a slow firing, lay down in the woods awaiting the arrival of the Fifth Corps, who were to attack the enemy on the flank.

The Fifth Corps was slow in coming up and Gen. Sheridan was out of patience and tearing around like a lion. When they did



arrive they did not enter the fight to suit him, so, grasping his headquarter flag he led them to the charge. The slowness of Gen. Warren, who commanded the Fifth Corps so displeased Sheridan that he relieved that officer and put another in command. This act brought on a controversy that lasted years after the war was closed.

We waited and waited for the Fifth Corps until well on in the afternoon before their firing was heard on the left of the enemy, when our whole line arose and pushed forward. The cavalry had been fighting on foot, but when the Fifth Corps attacked, Custer mounted his Division and charged on our left. That, with the pressure of the Fifth Corps on the right, broke the line of the enemy and the rout began. From then on until after dark all hands were busy gathering in the captured arms and prisoners.

The affair at Five-forks smashed the right of the enemy line, and Lee's position became untenable. From that hour began the retreat of the Army of Northern Virginia, and the race that was to end at Appomattox Courthouse.

For the next eight days the cavalry was constantly in the advance, always on the lookout for a chance to jump in upon the marching flank of the enemy and do him damage. Once or twice it was thought that we had headed him off, but Lee got away by taking another road.

On the afternoon of April 8th, Gen. Merritt sent me forward with a verbal message to Gen. Custer to halt and mass his Command. I hurried on and overtook Gen. Custer not far from Appomattox Station. On my delivering the message Custer replied that it was too late, that his advance was about entering the station and he couldn't stop now. In a few minutes the whole Division was on the run and swept into the station on the gallop, capturing two trains of loaded cars and some prisoners. History says that three trains were captured. I only saw two, but there might have been another train farther up the track that escaped my notice. In almost no time Yankee engineers were at the throttle of each locomotive and ran the trains back out of the way of recapture.

Custer's advance kept on beyond the station, running into a park of Lee's artillery, which they captured.

The cavalry then went into camp about and beyond Appomattox Station to rest and get ready for what was to happen in the morning.

The morning of April 9th dawned somewhat cloudy, with a light fog. No advance was made till eight or nine o'clock in order that the infantry might come up within supporting distance, in case they were needed.

About that hour the cavalry went forward and soon met the skirmishers of the enemy, when brisk firing began on both sides. It continued for some time when the enemy showed a strong force and we were obliged to give ground slowly. The enemy seemed to think there was nothing in their front but cavalry, and they could

be brushed aside. They were pushing us pretty hard when "hurrah" here came the head of the Fifth Corps, who immediately deployed and took our places. The cavalry then retired, mounted their horses and formed line on the skirt of a belt of woods on the enemy's flank.

Just at this time a man on horseback appeared from the Rebel lines displaying a flag of truce in the shape of a dirty handkerchief. On his being met by Gen. Sheridan, an armistice was declared to last for, I think, four hours and all firing was to cease until the expiration of that time, when, if no agreement was made between Grant and Lee, hostilities would be resumed.

Being a Staff officer, I was privileged to ride about on any part of the field. I chose to go always looking out for events that would interest my chief to know.

I was standing in front of the line of cavalry when Gen. Custer came along and disappeared on a by-road that led into the belt of woods in our front. Presently Gen. Sheridan and Staff rode up and inquired which way Custer had gone. I spoke up and said "right here sir." I led off, followed by Sheridan and Staff. We had not gone more than a hundred yards into the woods, where we were met by a party of Rebels, who evidently did not know that firing had ceased. They fired some few shots at us and ran away. No body was hurt, but I have often thought that had one of these shots killed Gen. Sheridan it would have been a great misfortune to the country.

In the meantime, Grant had come up and met Lee at the McLean cottage in the village, where the Articles of Agreement were signed. It was a very interesting sight to see the officers of the two Armies fraternizing as if they had not been fighting each other for four years. I very well remember the meeting between Gen. Custer and a rebel officer who had been his class-mate at West Point. Each threw his arm around the other and seemed really glad to meet again as friends.

Among the last to be killed at Appomattox Courthouse was Lieut Col. Root, of a New York Regiment. He was buried in the dooryard of a residence in the village where he had fallen. There were some early roses blooming in the yard and another officer and myself picked some of them and laid them reverently upon his grave. It seemed a pity that he should be killed at the very last hour of the war.

After the conference of the Generals was ended, Custer came out of the house, bearing on his shoulder, the table on which the surrender had been signed.

Among the officers assembled around the Courthouse Square there were Longstreet, Gordon and many of lesser note. At a set-to at Sailors Creek on the sixth, Gen. Ewell, with his one leg and a man behind him carrying his crutch, Gen. Kershaw, Gen. Rooney

Lee, son of R. E. Lee and many others had been captured and were now prisoners of war and could not be present at the surrender.

On the morning of the tenth I knew there was to be another meeting of Grant and Lee. So myself and Lieut. Wiggins of the staff, in order to get a good look at Gen. Lee, went down the road on which he would come; and as he approached we lined ourselves on the side of the road and saluted as he passed in company with his Adjutant General, which salute he returned by touching his hat. We then followed him back to the village and looked on while he and Grant held their last conference. A pencil sketch taken by a private soldier on that occasion, is still in my possession.

No one not there, can have any idea of how we all felt after the surrender. It was as if a great black cloud had been dispersed and the sun had again come out in all its splendor.

Gen. Merritt being appointed one of the Commission to carry out the terms of the surrender, he and his staff remained at the Courthouse after the bulk of the army had departed. On the eleventh a Division of Union Infantry was drawn up in line and the Confederates marched up, laid down their arms in front of the Union line and went their way. Our men were instructed to make no insulting remarks during the passage of the Rebs but to keep a respectful silence, which order was obeyed to the letter as far as I could learn.

After it was all over the troops left at the Courthouse dispersed to join their several Commands, having been lately promoted to the rank of Major I was mustered in and joined my regiment some miles away. The cavalry was then headed for North Carolina, their objective being Johnson's Army, to help Sherman capture it. We had proceeded as far as the North Carolina line when news came that Johnson had surrendered.

At a little village near the North Carolina line there was a tavern with a swinging sign in front of it, bearing the name of Lincoln. Riding up to the proprietor, who stood in the door, I asked if he was related to Abraham Lincoln. He said that he was a distant relation, but was ashamed of it. He appeared to be of the ignorant Cracker variety of the Chivalry, but still thought himself above and beyond the immortal Abraham.

On hearing of Johnson's surrender the column was halted and ordered to put about and make for Petersburg and Richmond. We arrived there in due time, and after a day or two of rest took up the march to Washington. The order of march was so different from anything we had been accustomed to during the years of the war that we could hardly realize it. Instead of marching with an advance and rear guard and often with flankers out, we sauntered along in a careless manner, perfectly at ease. No guard mounting in the morning, no pickets out at night, no foraging, no nothing but to make the march as easy and comfortable as possible

for men and horses. It was a most delightful trip and we really enjoyed it and were sorry when it ended. On leaving Richmond we took the Brooke Pike, one of the principal roads leading into the city. I was interested in looking at the defensive works along the road.

During the Kilpatrick Raid on Richmond the year before, our Brigade had been drawn up in column of fours on this road, with orders to charge into the city, reach Libby and other prisons and release the Union prisoners. I had been in Libby and knew about where it was. My horse being about played out, I made an exchange and got a better one. The Command Forward came and we started but had not gone far when it was countermanded and we came back.

From what I now saw I concluded that we never could have succeeded but would have been knocked to pieces before getting in. Kilpatrick's second thought was surely the best.

Our march carried us to the Rapidan River at Summerville Ford, a place we had often seen before.

Our route took us within a few miles of the old camp ground where we spent the winter of 1863-4. It was the most comfortable winter we had passed in the Army. Four of us, who had wintered there, concluded to ride over and visit the old place. We found it in ruins, the old log cabins tumbling down, weeds growing all around and things looked desolate and forlorn.

In wandering about we came to the ruins of the log cabin once occupied by Capt. Billy North, of Company "K" who was killed at Winchester. A fine, handsome young fellow, whom everybody liked. One of our party who was a good singer started up an old familiar song that we had often sung together in the days gone by. We all joined in and sang it to a finish. Then with sad hearts and eyes running over we silently turned and rode away. Not a word was spoken until we had ridden some distance.

I doubt if a more genuine heartfelt tribute was ever paid to the memory of a departed friend and comrade. Of the four hearty young fellows who rode that day three have gone to their eternal rest and the fourth is "Only waiting till the shadows are a little longer grown."

Arrived at Washington we went into camp on the hills near the city and busied ourselves in cleaning up the arms and accoutrements, brushing and mending clothes and fixing up to make as good an appearance as possible in the Grand Review, which was to take place on the arrival of Sherman's Army. The Army of the Potomac had gathered around Washington awaiting the event. In a week or so Sherman's army appeared and on the morning of the 23rd of May the Review began and lasted until evening of the 24th. During that time more than two hundred thousand men passed the Reviewing Stand. The cavalry led the march. In passing the Reviewing Stand Gen. Custer, who rode a thorough-bred stallion



brought his sabre to a salute, at which the horse took fright and bolted like the shot of a gun, running about half a block before being brought under control.

Some thought Custer did that for effect, but that was not so. The horse was a powerful animal and hard to handle. He was accustomed to the race course and seeing the crowds and hearing the music, he thought it time to go and he went.

The passing of these two armies in Review was something long to be remembered.

They were no Sunday soldiers, but the real stuff, weather beaten, war worn, hardened veterans, nothing bright about them but their arms.

Had the American people been in a mood for conquest, instead of desiring peace more than all else, these men—together with the armies of the Confederacy—could have marched forth conquering and to conquer until everything in their path had been subdued. Nothing on earth could have stopped them. But perhaps it is better as it is.

Their Commanders too were the ablest soldiers of the time and able to cope with any General of the period. So ended the last act of the greatest tragedy of the age.

During the war I once heard a prominent minister dilate on the awful things that were to happen when the country would be over-run by a million or more discharged soldiers. How little he knew the American Volunteers. Really, the country was in more danger from the preachers than from the men who had fought the four years war..

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### **The Grand Review and the Famous Organizations and Leaders That Paraded Up Pennsylvania Avenue in May, 1865—The Most Imposing Military Demonstration the World Ever Saw.**

At the time of the 36th National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic was held in Washington City in 1892, a valuable little booklet was issued entitled "Washington in War Time." To this John McElroy, then Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, contributed the following description of the Grand Review:

This strifeful old world has seen many imposing military pageants since first the sword began to devour, by way of saying the last word in disputes. But never, not even

In the glory that was Greece,  
And the grandeur that was Rome,

not even when Napoleon marched his eagle-bearing legions back to Paris from the wreck of empires and the destruction of dynasties, did the hours keep pace with the march of so mighty a torrent of warlike power as swept in unbroken tide along Pennsylvania Avenue for two wide-arching May days of 1865.

In numbers it was bewildering; in history, startling; in character, overwhelming.

Its banners showed the scars of two thousand battlefields, many of them the bloodiest in history, and were consecrated by the lives of half a million young men who had fallen around them since first unfurled. A mightier army than Napoleon led to the mastery of Europe had perished in carrying forward those banners to victory. Each one of the myriads of bronzed young veterans who strode up the avenue in the pride of trained and perfected soldiery represented an average of nearly half a score of youthful companions who had started in with him, but who were now sleeping in shallow graves, lingering on beds of pain, or scattering back to their homes as wreckage drifting from the vortex of the "far-flung battle line."

Four years of incessant battling with a foe of finest mettle had also burned out all the dross and the weaklings, and moulded and tempered that marching host into comparatively the finest military weapon ever forged to execute a nation's will.

It was led by men whose names will forever shine in our history as types of the highest soldiery, joined to the purest patriotism.

### **The Army of the Potomac**

The first day the Army of the Potomac, in a dense column which filled the wide avenue from curb to curb, marched by from early morn until late at night. No better demonstration of the marvelous efficiency which had been attained in its four years' schooling in war can be given than that 80,000 men should be able to pass in perfect military order by a given point in a single day. This would be impossible in the best drilled legions of Europe today. And with that Army, what recent and vivid memories marched? Of the months of bloody welter on the Peninsula. Of the battle surges over the oft-reddened plains of Manassas. Of that awful September day, on the banks of the Antietam, which closed with 12,000 boys in blue lying dead or wounded. Of that still more bitter December day at Fredericksburg, when American valor reached its supreme exaltation, and 13,000 fell in an assault foredoomed as hopeless. Of that wasted opportunity at Chancellorsville, which cost 16,000 men and the sanguine hopes of the close of the war. Of the momentous three days at Gettysburg, which finally turned back the tide of audacious rebellion, at the price of 5,000 Union dead, and 12,000 wounded. Of those 30 days of mortal wrestling between the Union and Confederate Armies from the Rapidan to the James, which cost the Union Army 45,000 men, and filled every household in the South with mourning. Of the months of anxious, persistent, inflexible siege of Petersburg. Of that most magnificently thrilling of all man-hunts in history, the blood-hound rush of Grant's whole Army after Lee's, for a hundred

miles, over Virginia's brakes and bournes until the end came at Appomattox.

For four long years the people had been walking daily with the grand, grim, unconquerable Army of the Potomac thru the Valley of the Shadow of Death, with only infrequent ascents to the mountain peaks of Victory, but now it was fresh from the complete overthrow of its mighty antagonist. These were the men who had been thru all this, the survivors of the host which had accomplished it all, bearing the flags around which they had unfaltering gathered, no matter how disasters thickened.

### **Gen. George G. Meade.**

At the head of this Mississippi of warlike force rode its Commander, George Gordon Meade—tall, grim, spectacled, his broad shoulders bent as if by the weight of the burden he had carried from Gettysburg to Appomattox.

Sheridan, the whirlwind of battle, was missing from the glorious Cavalry Corps, which he had awakened to its strength, and fashioned in the forge of war into the mightiest mounted force that ever drew saber. He had been rushed off to the Rio Grande, to throttle an exotic empire planted in Mexico by Napoleon III, who counted us of too little worth. Sheridan was well-spared, however, for awhile later the imported Emperor was taken out and shot.

The Cavalry was led by such incomparable lieutenants as the theatric, dashing George A. Custer and the quiet, gray-eyed George A. Crook.

The Second Corps, each man in its perfectly aligned ranks prouder of his clover leaf badge than of a peerage in the United Kingdom, was led by Andrew A. Humphreys, an ideal American soldier and corps commander.

The Fifth Corps, whose Maltese Cross had badged the dead in the forefront of every line of battle of the Army of the Potomac, was led by tall, slender, knightly, "Charley" Griffin, who had four years before entered the Corps as an enthusiastic young battery Captain, and was now wearing the double stars of a Major General, well earned in more than a score of hard-fought battles.

### **The Sixth Corps.**

Those who on breast or cap wore a Greek Cross as a proud armorial bearing were the men who had followed the leonine John Sedgwick until his character had become theirs. They were led by tall, precise, formal Horatio G. Wright, an Engineer officer all thru. But he could drop his theorems and triangulations with remarkable quickness when the bugle called, and hurl the Sixth Corps like an avalanche to break the backbone of the Confederacy at Petersburg, or smash the heads of Lee's columns at Sailor's Creek.

The Ninth Corps—"Burnside's Geography Class"—which had carried its cannon and anchor badge from Roanoke Island to the Antietam, and then to Vicksburg and East Tennessee, to return to the Army of the Potomac for the Wilderness and the siege of Petersburg, was led by another Engineer officer, John G. Parke, with the memory of the gallant work of the Corps at Fort Steadman only a few weeks old.

The finest array of light artillery then in the world came by under command of tall, swarthy Henry J. Hunt, devout believer that Providence was on the side that had the most cannon and worked them to the best advantage.

Many of the loved and trusted leaders now belonged to history. The brilliant Kearney and the steadfast Stevens had fallen at Chantilly, in sight of the Capitol they were defending. Reno had died at South Mountain as his Corps had reached the crest it was assaulting. Mansfield and Richardson passed into the Beyond at Antietam. Reynolds only saw the beginning of the battle he opened at Gettysburg. Grand old John Sedgwick had fallen beneath a sharpshooter's bullet at Spotsylvania, and that superb example of genuine American aristocracy, James S. Wadsworth, had received the last of his wounds in the Wilderness.

### **Sherman's Army.**

The next day came another host mighty as the first, vying with it in the greatness of its history and the magnitude of its achievements—strangely like it in many things, strangely unlike it in others.

It was Sherman's army marching into the Capital from the conquest of half a continent, ending on the banks of the Potomac a march begun four years before, 2,000 miles away on the banks of the Ohio.

They were all Western men. The State builders of the great country beyond the Alleghanies. Their battle flags bore the inscription: "Belmont," "Donelson," "Shiloh," "Corinth," "Perryville," "Stone River," "Vicksburg," "Chickamauga," "Mission Ridge," "Atlanta," "Savannah," "Carolinas," "Bentonville," and a thousand minor battles, each of which had thrilled the people's hearts to the core.

They were restless, aggressive men; tiger-like in attack, and wild boars on the defense, who had hunted down and fought their enemies in every State in the so-called Southern Confederacy. No mountain-top was too rugged, no swampy fastness too impenetrable to shelter any man who drew a sword or raised a flag in hostility to the Government. While the Army of the Potomac was chained to Washington, and fought all its battles within a few score miles of the Capital, they marched and fought over territory exceeding that of the battling grounds of all Europe. They had cut the Confederacy twice in twain, and then drove out broad swaths thru the hearts of the seceding States.



Their appearance showed they were wider rangers, freer lances than the Army of the Potomac. The men of the latter approached more nearly the Regular Army model of dress, marching, and maneuvers. The Western Army was rather careless as to dress and equipments, only caring to have enough to show that they were Union soldiers. Nor did they bother much about proper cadence, and absolute perfection of alignment, but moved with the long, swinging stride which had carried them with marvelous swiftness over 11 States.

At their head rode the General-in-Chief, William Tecumseh Sherman—with the laurels of Atlanta, the March to the Sea, Thru the Carolinas, and the Surrender of Johnston still recent and fresh. Tall and sinewy, with rugged face and gleaming eyes, he looked the ideal leader of battle and conquest. By his side, with armless sleeve, rode one of his principal lieutenants—Oliver O. Howard, the Christian soldier, and the Commander of the Army of the Tennessee from Atlanta to Washington.

### **Gen. John A. Logan.**

There now rode at the head of the Army of the Tennessee John A. Logan, the greatest volunteer General of the War, whose sword had won him that eminence from the starting point of a Colonel of a regiment.

The Fifteenth Corps, which had been commanded by Sherman in the Vicksburg campaign, and afterward by Logan in the Atlanta campaign, and thru the Carolinas, was led by William B. Hazen, the hero of Fort McAllister.

The Seventeenth, McPherson's old Corps, was commanded by Frank P. Blair, the soldier-politician, who, with Nathaniel Lyon, had saved Missouri to the Union.

The Army of Georgia was commanded by the quiet, scholarly Henry W. Slocum, whose face reminded one of Dante's.

The Twentieth Corps was commanded by "Fighting Joe Mower," who had entered the Army in 1847 as a Private in the Engineers and had been made a Major General for the passage of the Salkehatchie.

The Fourteenth Army Corps, the Corps which "Pap" Thomas had fashioned and made "the Rock of Chickamauga" was commanded by dark-faced, sour-looking Jefferson C. Davis, every inch a soldier, who had given the best taste of his quality at Pea Ridge, when, having fought a successful fight thru, at great loss, on one part of the line, had led his brigade at once to another part and helped win the battle there.

### **They Missed Lincoln.**

The triumphant troops missed on the reviewing stand the face of all others they had most longed to see, that of the great-hearted, kindly Lincoln, who had fallen beneath the assassin's bullet a few weeks before.

His place was taken by heavy-jowled, red-faced Johnson. At his side stood the great organizer of victory, the iron-willed Stanton, Secretary of War.

Most interesting of all in that group was the ruddy, bearded, stoop-shouldered, quiet man with three stars in his straps, who had commanded all the Armies of the United States in the last decisive year of the war. A tanner's clerk when the war began; a Colonel in his first campaign, who won every promotion by success upon the field of battle; who was constantly called to "come up higher," because he had done so well below; who had never fought but to win; and never organized but to succeed. The end of the war saw him the sole commander of a million battle-trained veterans, the mightiest host in every way that the world had ever seen subject to one man's will, and there was but one voice as to the eminent fitness for that pinnacle of unprecedented greatness of Lieut. Gen. Ulysses Grant.

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### EARLY DAYS IN MONTANA.

In the spring of 1869, I concluded to cut loose from all former associations and, taking the advice of Horace Greely, to go West and grow up with the country, I arranged my small affairs, packed up and lit out. About the last place I called to bid good-bye was the home of my brother, David, who followed me to the gate and flung an old shoe after me for good luck.

The first stopping place was Omaha, where I remained a week looking about, but seeing nothing to induce me to remain pushed along to Cheyenne. I was not favorably impressed with the place and, falling in with an emigrant train headed across the plains for California, made a bargain with the captain of the train to carry me and my traps and feed me by the way. With the train was a young doctor from Missouri, who was travelling as a passenger like myself. He was suffering from tuberculosis and hoped that the trip would do him good. I had one letter from him after he arrived in San Francisco, but have heard nothing from him since then, but hope he still survives.

The trip across the plains was somewhat monotonous with only now and then a little excitement. The country was then new and just as nature made it. For hundreds of miles there were no inhabitants except Indians and wild game,—both of these were quite plentiful,—but we met with no hostile Indians on the trip. One day we saw a large lot of Indians in front of us and it looked for a time as if we might see trouble. Our train was corralled, arms were distributed among the men, and we put ourselves in position for a fight. One Indian came toward us for a pow-wow and told us that they were Shoshones and friendly. He could speak some English. Our captain was still afraid and concluded to put back

some few miles to the station of an Indian Agent that we had passed. We then put back. As I had lately been in the army, I took command of the rear guard, and we fell back in true military style. When we reached the agent, he told us there was no danger, saying that if we lost our stock these Indians would help to find them.

The next scare took place one evening after dark, while in camp. There was always a guard all night to watch the horses against Indians. The guard fired his gun and the women set up a cry that the Indians were here and they would all be killed and scalped, and the excitement was great. Taking a gun that was given me, I went out to see what was wrong, when he quietly told me that he had fired his gun to get somebody to come out and relieve him so he could get his supper. So ended the last scare. The young Missouri doctor and myself had no end of fun over the way some of those people acted. Had we had wives and children in the train, we might have looked at things differently.

The trip through the Bitter Creek country was hard on both horses and people. There was no water for many miles and the alkali dust filled our eyes and mouths. It was a great relief when we reached Rock Spring. Here quite a large spring bubbles up at the base of a big rock and the water is clear and cold and there is plenty of it. The thirsty horses sank their noses in the water nearly up to their eyes.

On the trip across the plains we frequently came upon a grave by the side of the road with a headboard often without a name, but simply saying "Killed by the Indians." In that way many a poor fellow met his fate.

After travelling a month or more, we came into Utah, passed Echo Canyon where the Mormons had fortified against the government troops under Joe Johnson in 1857, and passing through Weber Canyon and Weber Valley, reached Salt Lake City, where we camped for a rest. At that time Salt Lake was a thriving city, but nothing like what it is today. It appeared to be well governed and good order prevailed. There were no saloons in the city, and only one place where liquor was sold, and that under the charge of the church. Not a drunken man was to be seen and no loafers—everyone seemed to have something to do and was doing it. I was anxious to see Brigham Young so taking a stand near his residence, watched until he came out. He was a fine figure of a man and looked like one born to command. The story of the Mormon trip across the plains and the hardships they bore is well worth reading.

After two days rest, our train took the route to the West, camping the first night at Corrinne, a small station on the Central Pacific Railroad that had lately been completed. This was the shipping point for all coming from or going to Montana. I there met some miners, who had just come down from there, and sitting at

their camp fire, I had a talk with them about the country up north. They gave a rather discouraging account of the country, saying that it was played out, that miners wages were down to six dollars a day, and that many were leaving the place. As I had no particular destination in mind, and as my finances were getting low, and I didn't care much where I went anyhow, it occurred to me that in a place where wages were six dollars a day, I might perhaps pick up a living. There was a freighter camped close by loaded and ready to start for Montana. I went over to see him and bargained with him to take me and my traps to Helena for the sum of twenty dollars. Settling up with the captain of the train, I moved myself and traps over to the freighter's camp, and next morning early, we were on the road to Montana.

I had purchased a few supplies before starting, a coffee pot, a frying pan, etc., and was fixed for the trip. I had also provided myself with some fish hooks and lines, as I was told that fishing was good along the way. In the morning it was my custom to start off on foot ahead of the teams, when, coming to a stream, I would fish until the wagons overtook me. In that way the mess was furnished with fish during the journey, and it also gave me something to do that was pleasant and kept me in good trim. At the end of twenty-one days we reached Helena after a very pleasant trip, during which I had walked most of the way, some five hundred miles, and enjoyed every mile of it.

When we arrived in Helena, the freighter put up at Payne's Corral, where the Post Office building now stands, and spreading my blankets under a shed, slept there the first night. In the morning, starting out to look over the town, I found a small cabin over in Dry Gulch, opposite the Hangman's Tree, which I rented and moved into. It was very small, but had in it a wooden bunk and an old sheet iron stove, which was just what I wanted. I was now landed in Helena with a roll of blankets, a few cooking utensils, a week's grub on hand, and a dollar and fifty cents in my pocket, with the world before me. Looking back over those times, it seems to me now that I was about as happy then as I was before or have been since. My health was fairly good, there was no one to provide for but myself, and if there was nothing in me to prevent going down in the struggle, surely the loss would be small to any concerned.

On my first evening in Helena, I sauntered into the Exchange Gambling House which was wide open on the ground floor, with about a dozen games going on. Seated behind a table dealing faro, I saw a man whose face was familiar. I could not place him, but on inquiring of someone, found his name was Forky. I had known him in the Army as one of General Sheridan's scouts, Not knowing a soul in the Territory, I was strongly tempted to speak to him, but on second thought decided it was not best to begin my acquaintance among the gamblers. He and I met on the



street several times when we would eye each other closely but did not speak. Sometime afterwards he was shot and killed in the street by another gambler. I was sorry then that I had not renewed our acquaintance. He was buried back in the hills and some thirty years later, I had his bones removed to the Grand Army burying ground that had lately been established, and a government headstone put up, giving his name and regiment. So ended poor Forky. He was a good soldier and a brave man.

A few days after arriving, I was on the street and saw a farmer with a load of potatoes. Going up to him, I asked if he did not want a man to help dig potatoes. He replied that he did. So we struck a bargain and I went with him and worked until the job was finished. After that, I found a job removing a lot of tailings in the gulch to make room for a street that is now Sixth Avenue. The boss was a kindly man, and seeing that I was willing but awkward, he would take hold of my shovel and show me how to handle it with more ease to myself. The work was hard to a green hand and made me very tired. My hands got so chapped and cracked that the shovel handle was often marked with blood. After that job was done I applied at several places for work without success. I was directed to a place where work could be had at washing dishes in a restaurant, but I drew the line at dish-washing. I was willing to take any decent, manly work, but not that.

Winter was now coming on and it behooved me to look for some steady work. Hearing of a farmer who wanted a man for his board and lodging to do small work about the place, a bargain was made and I took up my abode with him. My work was feeding and taking care of the stock, hauling wood from the hills and cutting it up for firewood. During one trip to the hills something happened that might have finished my career. The wagon was heavily loaded with logs and going down quite a steep grade, the rough-lock broke. I was walking by the side of the wagon when, the road being covered with ice, my feet slipped and the hind wheel whisked by my ear, just grazing my head. The wagon and load was dumped into a deep cut, one horse had a leg broken, and I showed up at the ranch in the evening with one horse where I had left in the morning with two horses and a wagon. You cannot imagine how cheap I felt and only regretted the loss was not all my own. However, the boss took it mildly and I doubt if he felt as bad as I did.

In the spring it was agreed between us that he would provide the teams and seed and I would put in a crop of potatoes and some early vegetables for the market, I to do the labor, the result to be equally divided between us. As soon as the ground was ready for plowing, I tackled the job. It was my first attempt and while the furrows were not very straight, the soil was agitated and

that was really the main thing. My only pair of boots became badly worn but the condition was not as bad as it might have been, for the water that found its way in on one side could find its way out on the other. I was too proud to complain but the boss took notice and kindly offered to loan me the money to buy a new pair. My underclothing was worn to shreds. One day I passed the door where the washing was going on, and the lady of the house was holding up my undershirt against the light and making fun of it. It looked as if a bombshell had burst in it and left only the outline of a shirt. But what did it matter, my appetite was good and there was plenty to eat.

When the early vegetables were ready for the market, I was up by daylight in the morning, preparing them for a trip to town. There was always a ready sale and by noon, my stock being disposed of, I returned to the ranch and went to work. In the fall the potatoes were dug, and the crop divided equally between us and my contract was ended. The proceeds of my share brought me Four Hundred and Fifty Dollars.

The year spent in the valley had been a year of toil mixed with some pleasure. The family I had lived with made the home pleasant for me and we got along quite well. The family consisted of the parents and four children, and a young lady cousin of the proprietor, who taught school in town and boarded at the ranch. She later went back East, but before leaving, she and I had made an agreement to wed at a later day, when my means would warrant it. Some four years later, she came up the Missouri River on the steamer, Nellie Peck, and I met her at Fort Benton. There was no one in town to perform the ceremony except a Justice of the Peace, who ran a butcher shop. He gave us a certificate which my wife often afterwards alluded to as her "butcher bill." The greatest misfortune of my life occurred when my wife was taken sick, and died in 1890. I hope to meet her on the other side, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

In the fall of 1870 I found employment with the firm of Hoyt and Deal in driving their grocery wagon and doing work about the store until the spring of 1871. At that time I found myself in possession of Five Hundred and Twenty-five Dollars and was looking around to see where I could invest it to good advantage. There was an old man who kept a little fruit stand in the Dunphy and Bentley Block, who was anxious to sell out and leave the country. He occupied one door of the building now known as the Cruse Bank. I bought his fixtures and rented the place, paying fifty dollars rent in advance, then taking what money I had left went out and bought a small stock of groceries—just what I could pay for—and opened a little business of my own. My stock could nearly all be put into a wheelbarrow, but by close attention to business I turned it over many times during the year. Aside

from the rent, my expenses were very light. I slept and cooked in the place and economized in every possible way.

Let me here say to those who come after me,—don't live beyond your means. It will surely lead to trouble, and besides, you cannot do it and be honest and, if not honest, what will you amount to in this world or any other. Cultivate a close friendship with reasonable economy,—it is the truest friend you will ever meet, and will never go back on you. It will lead you to success and without it you never can succeed in the long run. I know these are homely words and don't count for much in the estimation of many, but they ought to be written in letters of gold, for were they universally practiced, many miserable lives would be made happy.

My little business ran along quite smoothly for a time. In a careless moment I had signed a note with my old friend of the ranch for Three Hundred and Seventy-five Dollars and the note falling due I was called upon to pay it. The amount was more than I possessed by two hundred Dollars and I was feeling pretty blue. An old German, who was my neighbor, noticed my looks and inquired the cause. When told he said, "Come with me up to the Bank and I'll sign a note with you for the amount needed to help you out. This was done and with the help of my good friend, I was enabled to tide over an event that bid fair to wind up by business career. One would suppose that a lesson like that would have lasted through life but it didn't. Many years after I was caught for a much larger amount but was able to meet it without much trouble.

In the spring of 1873 one, E. H. Wilson, a grocery merchant of the street, died. J. L. Davis was in his employ and was made one of the administrators of his estate. I suggested to Davis that he and I form a co-partnership and take over the Wilson stock of goods on commission. This was done and I moved my little stock into the Wilson store and began business under the name of Davis & Wallace. We had behind us a stock of fine groceries, amounting to over Twenty Thousand Dollars, which we sold and settled for at the end of each month for what had been sold during the month. In that way we got a good start in business and were on our feet. The firm prospered from the very beginning and we succeeded in building up a nice trade by hard work and close attention. My partner was one of the best men about a grocery store that I have ever met and we got along nicely, but he never had learned the lesson of economy, and his expenses were more than they should have been. He was extremely good natured and also honest, but he in time became extravagant and loose in his habits, so much so that the reputation of the firm was made to suffer thereby. Things got so bad that I one day said to him that there had to come a change, that I would sell out to him or buy him out, just as it suited him. He concluded to sell, so I went to the bank and asked a

loan of Eleven Thousand Dollars on my individual note and got it. I was now in business by myself and in debt Twenty Thousand Dollars, Eleven Thousand to the bank and Nine Thousand on the building we had lately bought. It kept my nose close to the grindstone for the next few years but I finally got out of debt and things went along all right with much hard work and some worry. The year 1893 came along and with it the worst panic the West had ever known, but during all the hard times I was able to meet my obligations without borrowing any money or asking any extension of credit, while all around strong firms were toppling and banks were breaking. This I was enabled to do by no superior business ability but simply by the exercise of a reasonable economy and ordinary diligence.

My late partner started business in opposition in Helena and later in Butte but both times failed to succeed. He then went to Texas and in a few years returned to Helena, dead broke. I gave him employment at one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month but his habits were such that he could not support himself on that salary and overdrew his wages some three hundred dollars during the year, which sum I gave him, and we parted again for good. He had the qualities of a successful merchant but lacked the one essential to success—the ability to control his expenses—without that I have never known a man to succeed in business in the long run.

From the time when I first started a little place in what is now the Cruse building, the people of Helena seemed inclined to help one who showed a disposition to help himself, and I owe them a debt of gratitude. The first day I opened up a very prominent citizen called in and said, "Ah, my friend, you are opening a little game for the boys. You have my best wishes for your success." Later on another called and said, "From your habits of industry, you will in a few years accumulate a fortune of a hundred thousand dollars." I thought him extravagant in his idea, but industry and economy will accomplish much in time. I like the people of Helena. They are a free, independent and generous people. I once attended a funeral of a poor but well known man where the Rev. Mr. .... was to officiate. He did not show up and the funeral was kept waiting. Runners were sent out to find him and located him quietly eating a dinner to which he had been invited. After an hour's waiting he finally came. Col. Broadwater, a prominent citizen, was there with his carriage and it had been arranged that the minister would ride with him. When the procession was ready to start, the Colonel said, "Wallace, you ride with me. I was to have taken the Rev. Mr. .... but no d..... preacher can ride with me who keeps a funeral waiting while he eats his dinner." When the reverend gentleman appeared to take his seat in the carriage, the Colonel politely told him the place was taken. On another



occasion there was a fire burned out the residence of a poor man,—all he had. While the crowd was looking at the fire a well known citizen started a subscription list and Fifteen Hundred Dollars was raised to build a new house for the family. Where else would that occur? The man who started the subscription list was then chiefly known as an excellent poker player but later was prominent in business.

In the early days the men who handled the pick and shovel in the gulch were of a higher class than those found in that occupation now. Some of them might hold you up at the muzzle of a gun, but even these were above petty larceny. People could leave their doors unlocked and feel quite secure, but the advent of the railroad changed all that. I might add that the merchants of the town in early days were more manly men than those of the present day (not excepting the writer). They had their faults, they might drink and gamble and they might sometimes fight, but there was nothing small or mean about them. They were generous, big-hearted men, with pockets always open to the needy. The same may be said of the leading men in all occupations, the most of whom now lie in the cemetery. May they rest in peace.

The first legal hanging that took place in Montana occurred in Helena in 1871. A coldblooded murder had been committed and two men were arrested, tried, and sentenced to be hung. Seth Bullock was the Sheriff and, as I had been one of the jury, sent me an invitation which read,—“You are invited to attend the neck-tie sociable to take place in the jail-yard” (giving the hour and date).” Seth was quite a character and is yet. The last heard of him he was United States Marshall for South Dakota. He came into my place one day and said he would like a nice drink of sherry and egg, and if I would furnish the eggs, he would furnish the sherry. Now he had already been into Tom Groshon’s liquor store next door and arranged with him to furnish the sherry, so taking the eggs we went in and had our drink. While we were drinking someone asked Seth what part of the banquet he had put up. He smiled and answered, “Oh, I am the promoter.” That was a very good definition of a promoter for he doesn’t usually furnish anything but hot air. In an article that Seth wrote for the press he described a fist fight that had taken place on the street between a lawyer and a banker as a contest between the “law and the profits.”

In those days, Helena had a Volunteer Fire Department, consisting of one hand engine and one hose company, and nearly every able-bodied citizen belonged to one or the other of them. We of the Hose Company had weekly meetings, at which no subject for discussion was barred. The membership was composed of some of the brightest young fellows of the town, many of whom have since become prominent in their different walks of life.

When fires were few, and in order to keep the boys from getting rusty, it was the usual thing for some of the company to furnish amusement by setting fire to some shed or vacant building of no value, to keep us in practice. One who took a leading part in those escapades has since been 3 times governor of the State and recounts with glee the antics of those days. Our motto was "We destroy to save" and it may be said we lived up to the motto. Many useless shacks went up in smoke to furnish work for the Hose Company. Our meetings were held in a room in the old courthouse and some of the minutes of those meetings would be interesting reading at this date.

At the first meeting held after a fire had occurred that was of doubtful origin, some member was charged with starting the fire and brought before the bar of the House, a trial was held in due form, witnesses were examined and a verdict was reached, and, without regard to the evidence, the culprit was sentenced to "set 'em up for the boys." The one found guilty was usually a man who had had nothing to do with the job but the sentence was irrevocable. The boys were young and full of vitality and the Hose Company provided a safety valve for the surplus energy.

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### **SOME REMINISCENCES ON A TRIP TO THE GEYSER COUNTRY IN 1874.**

During the summer of 1874 a party of five consisting of Joe Flick, Charley Jeffries, Joe Stewart, Billy Muth and myself was made up to visit the Yellowstone Park. Its wonders had just become known to the world and we were anxious to see them. Saddle and packhorses were bought and two of the party set out to learn how to throw the "Diamond Hitch" and succeeded so well that our packs gave us but very little trouble after once being fastened on.

The first day's march brought us to the Halfway House (so called) kept by an old German and wife who were friends of Charley Jeffries. On learning of our destination the old lady said: "Cha—rlie you go by de Gallowstone?"—and Charley had that repeated to him many times during the trip.

In the morning we were up and off in good season. On arriving at the three forks of the Missouri we concluded to take the route up the Madison River. One day we rode into a cloud of flying ants that proved to be troublesome. They covered our horses, got into our hair, ears and nose compelling us to dismount and roll in the grass in order to get rid of them, but they soon disappeared.

At one of our camping places on the Madison River we found no fire-wood and were compelled to use some fence-rails for fire

to make coffee. Presently the owner of the ranch appeared with a gun on his shoulder and wanted to know who gave us permission to burn his rails. He seemed to be boiling over with wrath, and needed but little provocation to make him use his gun. Joe Flick took him in charge and with his oily tongue tried to pacify him, but with little success until producing the bottle, persuaded the man to take a drink. The dope soon began to work, and sitting down by our campfire he soon forgot the rails and became quite social. When about leaving us he told us that we might come over to his house and spend the night, but if we preferred to remain in camp we might use all the fence-rails we wanted to. He didn't care a d—— if we burned them all, much to our comfort.

We soon arrived at Henry's Lake—the source of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River—and camped for the night. Most of the night was spent by us in spearing trout from a boat with a jack in the bow, so that the fish were plainly seen lying on the bottom, and the sport was great.

At that time a man named Sawtell had taken up a homestead at the Lake and had around him quite a number of domesticated animals such as elk, deer and antelope. He had a very pleasant home, but during the Nez Perce Indian War of 1877 was burned out and the home destroyed.

Next morning our trip was resumed and in due time we arrived at the Lower Geyser Basin. Here we began to meet with the wonders of the Park, which I will not attempt to describe as they are now well known and beyond my powers of description. Here we camped for some days. There was another party camped near us and among them two ministers and, it being Sunday, they had divine service which we attended. It was no doubt the first meeting of the kind ever held in the Yellowstone Park. One of the preachers—Brother Van Orsdale—is still on the job and always recalls this incident when we meet.

We next started for the Upper Geyser Basin. The trail was bad, one of our packhorses in getting over a log got his fore legs over and there hung until boosted over. The road now between the two basins is like a city street.

As we reached the upper basin and emerged from the woods, Old Faithful was sending up a column of water and steam that was wonderful to behold. We made for a little clump of trees near the Castle Geyser and camped there. In getting to the spot we had to cross a miry place; in crossing it Joe Stewart's horse got gay, threw him off his knee striking a rock, making him lame for several days. The horse took to the river, the saddle hanging under his belly and was caught with some trouble.

After spending a week in the upper basin our next move was to find the lake and the canon. On reaching the lake we found two trappers who were camped on the shore. They had killed a bear and gave us what meat we wanted, which added an agreeable

change to our bill of fare. These trappers had built quite a nice sailboat which we hired for a day and sailed about the lake landing on an island where we picked some of the finest ripe raspberries we ever saw. We also found a few flint arrowheads, which proved the Indians had been there at some time, although it is said that Indians are afraid to frequent that locality. We caught many trout, some of which were wormy and unfit to eat. The water of the lake was impregnated with floating matter that looked like vegetation, and we thought might cause the fish to be wormy. Portions of the lake were covered with wild geese, ducks and swan and on the shore elk, bear and deer were quite plentiful, but we noticed almost a total absence of game birds such as grouse and prairie chickens.

After spending a few days at the lake we started to hunt for the canon and falls by following the course of the river, and reached it in due time. That awful chasm took up our attention for the next few days and we never tired of looking at it from different points of view. We stopped here for several days to let our horses graze on the excellent grass.

Our next point was the Tower Falls farther down the river. In getting there we travelled over some very rough country, camping on the way at Mount Washburn, about the highest peak in the Park. The Tower Falls don't compare in volume of water with the Great Falls above, but in some respects are more beautiful and the scenery round about is very fine. Just below the falls there is another canon that is almost equal to the one above. The water of Tower Falls has worn away the rocks until they stand up like the towers of a cathedral. One can stand under the fall and take a bath and the fishing there is excellent.

On our trip through the park we often wandered about for days not knowing where we were except for the general direction. There is a wonderful charm in sauntering over a country where all evidence of mankind is missing and where no human foot has ever trod before. The poet calls it "The joy of paths untrod", and while we were not the first to visit the country, we tried to imagine that we were, and all the surroundings helped us. In visiting the Park in later years there were no sensations at all to compare with those of the first visit.

Below Tower Falls—a number of miles—we came to a place where some hunters and trappers had built a foot bridge across the Yellowstone. They had a comfortable cabin and were prospecting the country round about for game and minerals. They were two brothers named McMillan and a man named George Huseton, (who later on was a Scout for Gen. Custer on his Western Campaign). They directed us to a place some miles back from the river called Speciman Mountain where we would find many petrified stumps and logs. They also told us that many miles to the



east there was a petrified forest still standing with petrified birds in the branches singing petrified songs. We reserved that trip for some future occasion, but they had the goods to show that Specimen Mountain was no josh. Some of the crystalized specimens they had were very beautiful. We went to the mountain and found it even more interesting than we expected to find it. This mountain is off the usual tourist trail and I have never talked with anyone who went there outside of our own party. We stopped for some days with these men at the bridge and rested ourselves and horses for the homeward trip.

While waiting we put in our time at trout fishing. There was quite a river joined the Yellowstone nearby, and at the junction we caught some of the finest trout we ever saw; none of them weighed less than two pounds and many of them more than that. We thought this stream to be the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone, but were not sure.

On resuming our journey we crossed the country until coming to Gardiner River, which we followed down to the Mammoth Hot Springs. After spending a few days there we bid farewell to the wonderful Yellowstone Park, following the river and crossing it near where the City of Livingston now stands, and crossed the mountains over into the Gallatin Valley. The valley at that time was almost a wilderness where now it is entirely occupied by a thrifty farming community. We were now within ninety miles of home and the balance of the journey was made by easy marches until we arrived at Helena. We had had a delightful outing and one that will always be remembered while we live. Only two of the party now survive and they are in the "sere and yellow leaf."

While the wonders of the Yellowstone Park were not generally known until the year 1869, they had partly been seen by the trappers as early as 1807. One Colter, who was a member of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, remained in or came back to the West and trapped on his own account. He has spoken of the Geysers and doubtless saw the Lower Geyser basin, but nobody would believe a trapper, they were such notorious liars.

In 1855 W. W. DeLacy—a civil engineer who died in Helena a few years ago—saw some of the wonders of the park and told of them but—being a very sensitive man—and seeing that some doubted his word—said but little about them. He was a very worthy gentleman and was entitled to all credit. He made the first map of what is now Montana. Being a modest man his name is not celebrated as it should be; there ought to be a county named after him. While living he was most thought of by those who knew him best. He talked but little and never blew his own horn. Should he ever get his deserts his name would loom large in the history of Montana, but as he took no part in politics and never pushed himself forward historians have partly overlooked him.

As early as 1842 Jim Bridger and one James Gemmel visited what is now Yellowstone Park and spoke of the wonders seen there, but the first reliable information given to the world came from the Washburn Party who went from Helena in 1871. From that year people began to flock from all parts of the world.

The objects of interest in the park are slowly undergoing a change. In 1874 Old Faithful erupted regularly every fifty-eight minutes. At this date—1914—it occurs once in every sixty-four minutes, which would indicate that it was slowly dying and in course of time may entirely disappear. Quite a number of changes since 1874 are noticeable in the size and appearance of some of the springs and pools and no doubt changes are constantly going on and some new springs have broken out since then. No one knows how the place will look in a hundred years from now. An earthquake may change the whole face of the country as it surely has in times gone by.

Of the five who made the trip in 1874 but two now survive. The leader of our party was Joe Flick, an old time miner and prospector and the one who had the best knowledge of the country. He could lose all landmarks and yet not be lost. He and his mare Lizzie furnished a lot of amusement on the trip. He would talk to Lizzie as if she understood every word he said and perhaps she did.

My old packhorse Shacknasty Jim with the wall eye also made some curious movements. If he spied a tuft of good grass up on the side of the mountain he would make for it, and when someone would call out "Jim" in a loud voice he would cock that wall eye and pretend he did not hear, but he usually succeeded in getting the bunch of grass and looked so contrite that we hadn't the heart to punish him.

During the Washburn Expedition one of their party, Mr. Evarts, became lost and wandered about in a woeful plight for some ten days or more. He was given up by the party and the search was taken up by some trappers. After a long hunt he was found by one of the trappers, when almost dead from hunger and exposure; he was afoot and in a dazed condition nearly unconscious. We met the trapper on our trip and he told us about it. He also stated that some time after the event he visited New York City and called on Mr. Evarts, who received him so coldly that, as the trapper explained it, "he wished he had let the son-of-a-gun roam."

I should have stated in the foregoing that in the year 1869 Dave Folsom and Charley Cook made a trip to the Geyser Country and reported what they had there seen. As they were both very reliable citizens, their report was the cause of the Washburn party making the journey in 1871. Both Folsom and Cook are still living at this date—1914—and are credited with giving the first information of the Geyser Country that seemed to take root and grow.

Head Quarters Cavalry Middle Military Division.  
Special Orders No. 26.

At his own request in consequence of promotion, Major Robt. Wallace, 5th Mich. Cavalry, is hereby relieved from duty at these Head Quarters and will rejoin his Regiment.

It is with much regret that these Head Quarters part with this gallant and accomplished officer. During his long service on the Staff of the Commanding Officer of the Cavalry of the Middle Military Division, Major Wallace has endeared himself to all with whom he has been thrown in contact, by his amiable and gentlemanly deportment, and has won the regard of his military superiors by his bravery on the field and his zeal and integrity of purpose in the performance of his duties on all occasions.

By Command of

Bat. Maj. Genl. Merritt.

E. M. Baker,

Capt. 1st U. S. Cav. & A. A. A. Genl.

Detroit, 6 March, 1868.

Sir:

I have the honor to recommend Brevet Lt. Col. R. C. Wallace, former Major in my regiment—5th Cavalry—for a position in the Regular Army.

Col. Wallace rose to the rank of Major from 2nd Lieut., having been promoted especially for gallant and meritorious services in the field. He is a thorough soldier, a gentleman and in every respect worthy of the highest confidence and also for any position that may be given him.

Any favor granted him will be highly appreciated by

Your very obt. servant

R. A. Alger.

Hon. L. Chandler,

U. S. Senate, Washington, D. C.

9th U. S. Cavalry

New Orleans, La., March 2nd, 1867.

My Dear Captain:

I just received your letter of Feby 22nd, this morning and hasten to reply to it.

I enclose you a recommendation to the Adjutant General of the Army. The best way for you to pursue is to send it to some friend in Washington a member of congress if possible, and let him present your application together with this and any other recommendations you may have to the Secretary of War, and I think there is no doubt about your succeeding. A great many of these appointments are made upon the application of the members of Congress from a state. If you know any of them use their influence; if you do not, get some recommendations from citizens in your

state to your District Representative in Congress and ask him, as you have a right to do to put the matter through. Hoping you may succeed, I am,

Very truly your friend,

W. Merritt.

In making your application give a brief account of your services in the army during the war, but be careful to make it succinct and short.

Since writing the above I have got General Sheridan to endorse my recommendation. If there is a vacancy I am satisfied you will succeed.

I am anxious you may. This is the first recommendation that I have given, and I have given a number that I have asked General Sheridan to endorse.

Very truly your friend,

W. Merritt.

Fort Davis, Texas, July 31st, 1867.

This letter was sent in March from New Orleans, but was not called for in Detroit and was returned to me through the dead letter office from Washington. I hope it will reach you and be of service to you if you still desire an appointment.

Yours truly,

W. Merritt.

Head Quarters 9th U. S. Cavalry  
New Orleans, La., March 2nd, 1867.

Major Genl. L. Thomas, Adjutant Genl. U. S. A.

Washington, D. C.

General:

I respectfully recommend to the favorable consideration of the War Department for appointment in the U. S. Army Captain R. C. Wallace, formerly of the 5th Michigan Cavalry.

Captain Wallace served on the staff of General Torbert and myself in the Armies of the Potomac and Shenandoah, and was one of the most efficient officers connected with the Cavalry of those armies.

While serving with the cavalry he gained a brilliant reputation as a gallant, efficient, and energetic officer and was universally and deservedly popular as a modest and accomplished gentleman. He deserves a high position in the Regular Army and I hope for his own sake and that of the service he will receive an appointment in the Cavalry.

Very Respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

W. Merritt.

Bat. Major General U. S. A.

Lt. Col. 9th U. S. Cavalry.



Head Quarters Department of the Gulf  
New Orleans, La., March 2, 1867.

I cordially concur in recommending the within named officer for an appointment in the Regular Army.

P. H. Sheridan,  
Maj. Genl. Commd.

Jan. 11, 1915.

Mr. R. C. Wallace.  
Helena, Montana.

Dear Comrade:

Yours of the 7th is before me. In reply will say I have never written a book on Gen. Custer or any other person. The National Tribune of Dec. 31, 1914, printed an address by me on Our Cavalry in July last when 25th N. Y. Cavalry Monument was unveiled here. A captain Whitaker wrote a book on General Custer soon after the Little Big Horn disaster, but he practically knew nothing of General Custer in the War of the Rebellion as he served in the Immortal 3rd or in the Michigan Brigade. By the way do you know personally anything about execution of some of Mosby's men in fall of 1864 by order of General Custer? I deny that he had any part in any execution of any men. Am I correct? If so, help me correct the false "history" they are trying to make. Mrs. Custer has appealed to me for the truth.

Sincerely Yours,

E. W. Whitaker.

Mr. R. C. Wallace, Helena, Montana.

756 Rock Ck. Ch. Road  
Washington, D. C. Feby. 27, 1916.

Dear Comrade:

I owe you a thousand thanks for your fine letter of Jan. 19, 1916, that shed so much light on Mosby's false charge against Gen. Custer. Excuse my delay in writing. Have been overwhelmed with work to force Mosby to correct his charge. For a while had your letter loaned out to a comrade who like myself is busily engaged in the interest of Mrs. Custer to wipe out the infamous charge against her gallant husband. Mosby is in ill health and may not survive long enough to correct his wrong. Your letter has been read to him and he has been urged by his friends to correct his charges before he dies. I shall write you later the result of my work and with Mrs. Custer's thanks also.

Sincerely yours,

E. W. Whitaker.

Mr. R. C. Wallace, Helena, Montana.

P. S.—How do your Congressional Delegation stand on our Val. Officers Retirement Bill. I favor Sherwood's Bill.

W.

Helena, Montana, Jan. 19, 1915.

Gen. E. W. Whitaker,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of the 11th asking if I know anything personally of the execution of some of Mosby's men in the fall of 1864. I have some vivid recollections of an affair of that kind which took place in the fall of 1864 near Front Royal which perhaps is what you refer to.

At the time of which I speak I was a Lieutenant serving as Aide on the staff of General Torbert, who commanded the First Division Cavalry Corps.

The event occurred when Sheridan attacked Early at Fishers Hill. General Torbert was sent with the first division to go up the Luray Valley and get behind Early to cut off his retreat (I am not sure whether or not any other troops went along with us). We proceeded up the Luray Valley about half way to the town of Luray, when we met quite a strong body of the enemy posted in a defile between the hills. After engaging for two hours or more we were unable to dislodge him, when we began to pull out and take the back track.

The ambulances with the wounded were sent ahead, escorted by a company of regular cavalry commanded by Lieutenant McMasters. When they reached Front Royal, they were attacked by a party of Mosby's men who robbed some of the wounded and otherwise mistreated them. McMasters came up and charged the rebels driving them off. In the chase McMasters (with his usual arder) got ahead of his men. Some of the rebels dodged behind a house and when McMasters came along they cut in behind and took him prisoner, but being hotly pressed were unable to get away with him. Rather than give him up they shot him in cold blood, using his own pistol for the purpose. McMasters lived long enough to tell how it happened and then died. Of course I did not see all this happen but it was the current story on the spot at the time. Our men succeeded in capturing a few prisoners, and the feeling against them ran high. You may imagine how we all felt at the cowardly way McMasters had been murdered.

Our command stopped for a while on the sloping hill-side near Front Royal. On looking down I saw one of the prisoners running and throwing up his arms as if to ward off the bullets that were being fired at him. I did not see him fall but of course he did fall. I don't know what Regiment did the firing, but at the time thought it was some of the Michigan men, but of that I am not sure. I never heard that General Custer had ordered it done, nor did I see him during the affair. Two of the prisoners were brought up to General Torbert, who ordered Capt. Bean of the staff to take them over to the woods and hang them. Bean did not fancy

the job and would fain avoid it, so he took the men apart each by himself and said to them that if they would give us some information that would be useful in hunting down Mosby perhaps their lives would be spared. Each for himself refused to talk so they were taken over to the woods and hanged.

I stood at Bean's elbow and heard part of the conversation. My heart was sore at the hanging of these two likely young fellows without any kind of a trial and not knowing them to be the guilty ones. It was a sad mistake and, as you must know, we paid for it with heavy interest.

McMasters was a friend of General Torbert, and he keenly felt (as we all did) the cowardly manner of his taking off. I don't know what became of the other prisoners, if there were any, but I remmember very well what become of the three above mentioned.

I have never seen a Confederate account of that affair, but of course in telling of it they will carefully avoid any mention of the cowardly murder that preceded it. I noticed some years ago that a monument had been erected at Richmond to the memory of the men who fell that day at Front Royal.

Many years have passed since the incident above related occurred, during which I have not seen or corresponded with any one who was present and knew the facts, so that my account of it is according to the original impression left on my mind, and is correct, barring the effect time may have had on my memory. Fifty years have passed since that day and most of those then present are now in their graves. May they rest in peace.

If you were present on the occasion mentioned I would like to get your version of it.

I well remember your active stalwart figure in war times, and hope life has been kind to you. We of the Civil War are getting old and it won't be long before the "Grim Reaper" will have gathered us all.

Some years ago I passed the spot where General Custer and his little band of heroes were blotted out on the Little Big Horn, and pictured to myself the awful struggle that there took place. It was a sad day for Mrs. Custer, but I hope that she may some time be made happy by meeting the General on the other side.

With highest regards, I am

Yours truly,

R. C. Wallace.

### WHEN I AM DEAD.

I do not want a gaping crowd,  
To come with lamentations loud,  
    When I am dead.  
Nor do I want my words and ways  
Rehearsed by them with tardy praise,  
    When life has fled.  
I only want the very few  
Who stood through good, and evil too,  
    True friendship's test;  
Just those who sought to find the good,  
And then as only true friends could,  
    Forgive the rest.  
I'd have them come, these very few,  
And drop, perhaps a tear or two,  
    By kindness led.  
To have them each come in alone,  
And call me in their old sweet tone,  
    Would suit me best.  
And then, without a sob or moan,  
Go softly out and leave alone  
    The dead to rest.

—Masonic Home Journal.







